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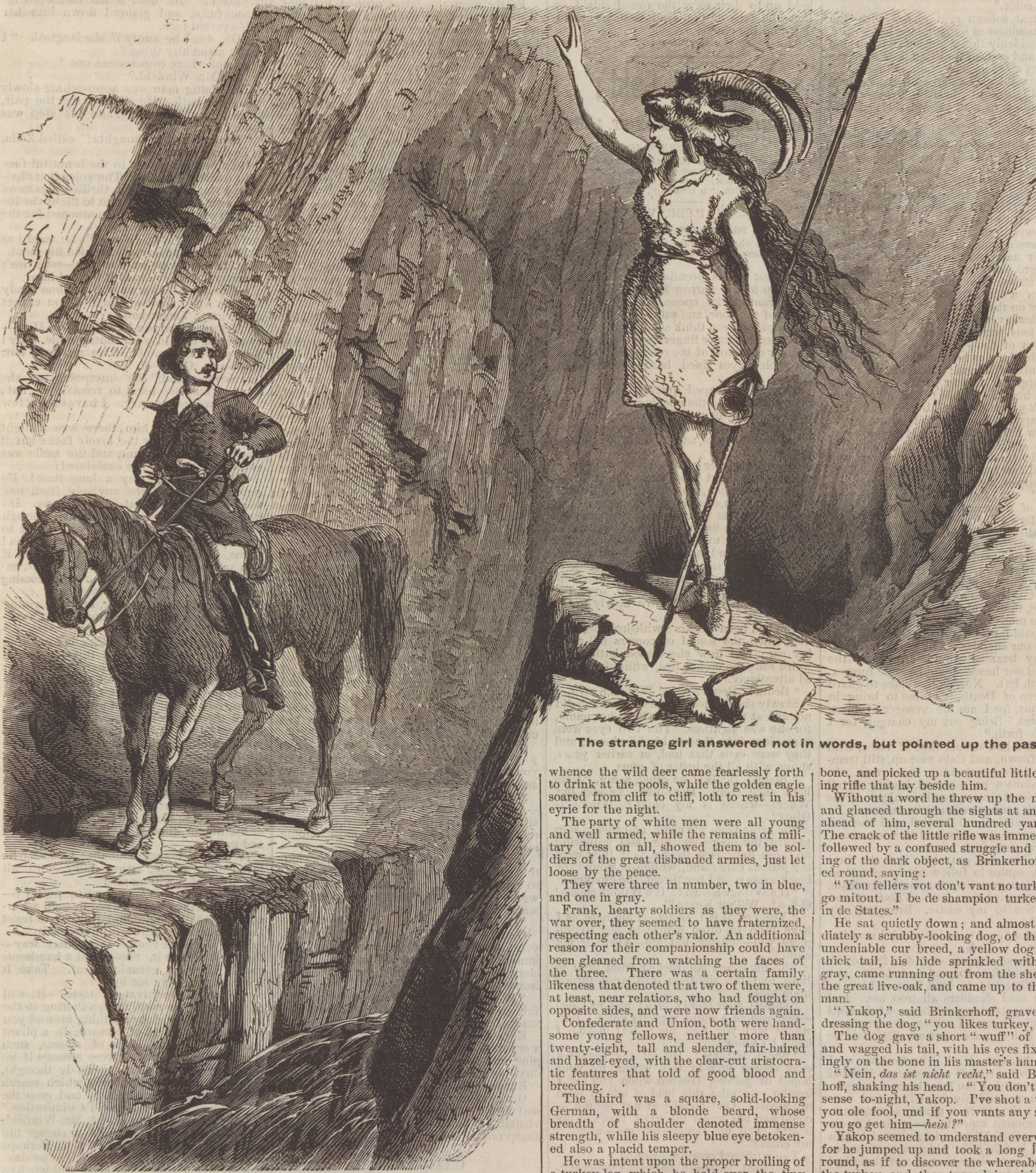
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The strange girl answered not in words, but pointed up the pass.

THE ROCK RIDER; OR, THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA. A TALE OF THE THREE PARKS.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.

Author of "The Red Rajah," "Knight of the Rubies," "Double-Death," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMRADES.

In the very heart of the Western Continent lie the Rocky Mountains, dividing the land like a vast backbone, shooting out ribs of rock to either ocean. In the heart of the Rocky Mountains repose the Three Parks, the hunter's Paradise.

Now they are inclosed within the bounds of Colorado, but not many years ago they were in that undefined region known as the "Great West." Then the white man was there only on sufferance, and the red king of the soil showed him no mercy, if he found him away from the protection of some friendly tribe. Now the rule is reversed, and the red man only stays on sufferance of the white.

In those doubtful days, not long ago, when the Pacific Railroad was making its first slow approaches from San Francisco, derided by its foes as the enterprise of madmen, and hampered at every step by want of money, consequent on the just-ended war; and when the Indians, from the long absence of troops from their neighborhood,

had become insolent and overbearing all over the plains and mountains, a small party of white men were gathered around a little fire in the center of the lovely South Park.

To the south-west towered the magnificent slopes of Pike's Peak, once the scene of a mining *furor*, but now deserted and silent. Its lofty summit, crested with snow, towered above the somber growth of pine and spruce that clothed its sides, through which the dark-gray volcanic rocks showed rugged and naked in the red light of the setting sun.

All around the horizon the jaded peaks and spurs of the Sierra shut in the view, inclosing in their frame one of the loveliest valleys in the wide world. Lofly perpendicular cliffs, crested with pines, hung over smooth grassy knolls, studded with clumps of trees here and there, with tiny pools scattered between the hollows, reflecting in their bosoms the far-reaching branches of live-oaks, two hundred feet in spread of shadow.

Little copses, gay with flowering shrubs, clustered near some of the clumps of trees,

whence the wild deer came fearlessly forth to drink at the pools, while the golden eagle soared from cliff to cliff, loth to rest in his eyrie for the night.

The party of white men were all young and well armed, while the remains of military dress on all showed them to be soldiers of the great disbanded armies, just let loose by the peace.

They were three in number, two in blue, and one in gray.

Frank, hearty soldiers as they were, the war over, they seemed to have fraternized, respecting each other's valor. An additional reason for their companionship could have been gleaned from watching the faces of the three. There was a certain family likeness that denoted that two of them were, at least, near relations, who had fought on opposite sides, and were now friends again.

Confederate and Union, both were handsome young fellows, neither more than twenty-eight, tall and slender, fair-haired and hazel-eyed, with the clear-cut aristocratic features that told of good blood and breeding.

The third was a square, solid-looking German, with a blonde beard, whose breadth of shoulder denoted immense strength, while his sleepy blue eye betokened also a placid temper.

He was intent upon the proper broiling of a turkey leg, which he held over the tiny fire; and said nothing, while the other two talked.

Close behind them was one of the enormous live-oaks, draped with moss, its branches drooping to the ground; and as the wind blew toward it, the smoke of their fire became completely lost in the branches before many feet. Under the tree one could hear the occasional stamp of a horse, and the sound of munching provender.

"What's the matter with Belcour this evening, Frank?" asked the young man in the gray coat. "He ought to have been in long ago, if he had any luck in shooting."

"That's just where it is, Jack," answered his cousin, Frank Buford, of West Virginia. "Gustave Belcour never will be a good shot. He's too nervous and excitable for long distances, although I'll admit he's not so bad with a revolver, in a close fight, not more than ten feet off. Then his quickness does him good service. He hasn't shot a thing, you'll see, and we shall have him back in a little while, with a long story of scarce game."

"I should call game pretty thick," said the ex-Confederate, dryly, looking round at the numerous deer and antelopes plainly visible in the valley at no great distance. "A fellow has only to sit here, and let his supper come to him."

"Belcour hasn't been here yet," said Buford, laughing. "He'll scatter them when he comes, you bet. Carl Brinkerhoff won't be able to get another turkey to-morrow, once Belcour comes."

The quiet German made no reply in words. Broiling his bone, as he had been, his sleepy blue eye had nevertheless been roaming over the valley all the time. As Buford ended, he quietly laid down his

bone, and picked up a beautiful little sporting rifle that lay beside him.

Without a word he threw up the muzzle, and glanced through the sights at an object ahead of him, several hundred yards off. The crack of the little rifle was immediately followed by a confused struggle and fluttering of the dark object, as Brinkerhoff turned round, saying:

"You fellows rot don't want no turkey can go mitout. I be de shampion turkey-eater in de States."

He sat quietly down; and almost immediately a scrubby-looking dog, of the most undeniable cur breed, a yellow dog with a thick tail, his hide sprinkled with dirty gray, came running out from the shelter of the great live-oak, and came up to the German.

"Yakop," said Brinkerhoff, gravely addressing the dog, "you likes turkey, hein?"

The dog gave a short "wuff" of assent, and wagged his tail, with his eyes fixed lovingly on the bone in his master's hand.

"Nein, das ist nicht recht," said Brinkerhoff, shaking his head. "You don't got no sense to-night, Yakop. I've shot a turkey, you ole fool, and if you wants any supper, you go get him—hein?"

Yakop seemed to understand every word, for he jumped up and took a long look all round, as if to discover the whereabouts of the turkey, and then turned inquiringly to his master.

"Ach, Gott!" said the German. "Yakop, you don't got no sense to-night. Can't you see vere I lay de cun, mit de parrel bointed shtraight at him—hein, you ole fool? You go gets him, kviek, or I take von shtick mit you."

Yakop immediately ran to where the gun lay, and took a bee-line for the dead turkey, which he brought back not ten minutes afterward, dragged triumphantly by the neck. But his tricks were not destined to be much more noticed at the time, for Jack Somers suddenly leaped up from his place, saying:

"By Jove, Frank, there he comes at last, empty-handed as usual. But what's the matter with him? He rides as if he was in a hurry."

"Indians, perhaps," said the Virginian, coolly. "I'm not going to stir from here for any thing less than a whole tribe. Belcour's a little scared, I guess, from his looks."

The German hunter said not a word, but picked up his rifle and threw open the breech, when he put in a new cartridge.

It was his method of preparing to receive strangers.

Buford and Somers shaded their eyes with their hands, and looked up the Park. There, in the center of a cloud of golden mist, that half-filled the valley, the form of a horse and his rider could be seen, coming at a swinging gallop.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA.

The tramp of a horse, with the sharp click that told of a shod hoof, disturbed the

usually solemn silence of the passes of the Sierra. Presently, in the midst of those grand solitudes, a horseman made his appearance, coming down a dark canon, on a narrow ledge about half-way up its sides. Below him, far below, the hoarse murmur of the little stream, that had formed that deep cleft in the course of ages, only served to make the silence elsewhere more noticeable.

The young man was of a face and form likely to arrest attention even in a crowd, and in those wild fastnesses he looked doubly handsome.

A little above the medium height, and with a form of remarkable grace, the dark rich beauty of his face, the large black eyes, curling raven hair, and trim glossy mustache, gave token of his Southern race, and were set off by a costume exceedingly rich and picturesque, but very unusual in those wild fastnesses.

The stranger's dress was, in fact, more like that of an artist of the Latin Quarter of Paris, or a riding master of the Hippodrome, than that of the rough and ready mountain man. He wore a broad Spanish sombrero, a velvet coat, all slashed and braided, natty white corduroys, and high, gleaming thigh-boots of patent leather, with long, silver spurs, while his arms, a carbine and revolvers, were all silver-mounted and of exquisite finish. The housings and furniture of his black horse (a thoroughbred of exquisite beauty) were equally sumptuous, the saddle alone, with its silver studs and Mexican trappings, being worth over a hundred dollars.

Such a gay cavalier had never before been seen in such a place.

He rode slowly and cautiously along, frequently glancing downward into the bed of the stream, and then upward at the rocks around, and there was an expression of vexation on his handsome face.

As he went he soliloquized, in a low tone: "Belcour, *mon ami*," he said, "what is the matter with thee to-day, that thou hast shot nothing? The bighorns they laugh at thee, and thou hast not seen one since the morning. Why do they avoid me so? There is stupid Carl Brinkerhoff, who goes out with his cur dog, and brings home game every time, and I can not get so much as a single shot, except so far off, and they going so fast, that I miss them. And then there is Somers, who will be laughing at me for coming in empty-handed, and I—ha! there he goes!"

He ended abruptly.

His discontented soliloquy was broken up by the sudden leap of one of those graceful mountain sheep, known as the "bighorn" from the huge curling ornaments of his frontlet. The animal came leaping down from the summit of the precipice on the opposite side of the canon, as if in a desperate hurry, or pursued, and lighted on a pinnacle of rock, about half-way down the side of the canon, not fifty feet from the young cavalier.

There it stood poised for an instant, as if equally surprised and dismayed at the meeting with the hunter, and then, gathering itself for a great leap, came flying over the dark canon to light down almost in front of horse and rider.

But, swift as the animal was, the aim of the young man was as quick. His rifle was at his back, and he had no time to get it out, but a pistol leaped from the holster like a flash, and leaning over his horse's side, with the rapid aim of instinct alone, he shot the animal through the heart at five feet distance.

The bighorn reared itself up for a single instant like a goat, pawed the air wildly, and fell back over the ledge into the stream below, stone dead, as Belcour joyfully exclaimed:

"Shot at last, and well shot, too, Gustave! My friend, thou wilt make a hunter yet. Now, what wilt Somers say? The animal is dead, without doubt."

He seemed as much pleased as a child, and so he was, for Gustave Belcour, handsome cavalier as he was, had been the butt of his companions all through their roaming expedition for his bad shooting.

He was too nervous and impatient, for the marksman must be cool and phlegmatic who hopes to be called a "dead shot," and Gustave had become almost disheartened at his own want of success, which was owing merely to the absence of a teacher to instruct him.

His chance shot elated him therefore in proportion to his previous failures.

The next minute, however, his countenance changed, as he looked down the precipice between him and his game.

He saw that descent was an impossibility, and that the mountain torrent was rapidly sweeping the body away toward the lower ranges of the Sierra.

"Ah, peste," he exclaimed, angrily, "but I have no fortune to-day, and shall lose it all if I do not follow. Forward, Echir, good horse, forward! We will follow while there is foothold left!"

And he shook the rein, and trotted on down the narrow ledge, his eyes fixed on the body of the quarry, swept along far below him, now lodging for a moment on a sharp rock, now hurried on again with increased rapidity.

Above him, at the instant he fired, a head, with the long, curving horns of the mountain sheep, was thrust forth for a moment over the precipice. It was instantly withdrawn, and a slight, graceful figure went bounding away over rugged slopes of rock, leaping over dark chasms with wonderful daring and agility, and following the same direction as the hunter, unseen by him.

Gustave rode rapidly down the ledge, and his hopes began to rise, for he perceived that he was approaching the water every moment. The canon pursued an irregular and winding course, and the ledge grew broader, till at last he uttered a shout of joy, for before him lay a steep slope, which appeared to lead to the edge of a waterfall, and there, on the shallow rim of the cataract, lodged against a pointed rock, lay the carcass of his recent game.

But he saw that the sloping ledge was much too steep for his horse, and reined up to dismount.

On the opposite side of the canon a succession of steep pinnacles formed a sort of pathway of steps, of which each was some twelve feet in height, and a little before him a cross canon opened its narrow, dark rift, from which a second stream descended, making the waterfall below into a curve.

Just as he pulled up, hesitating how best to descend, the mellow sound of a horn struck on his ear from overhead, and he looked up, wondering whence it came.

He almost threw himself, from the horse with the violent start he gave, at the sight that met his view.

On a lofty pinnacle of rock, relieved against the dark-gray background, looking down straight at him, stood a snow-white figure of the most unearthly and startling character, combined with a strange beauty that completely enthralled him.

A girl, habited in a species of short, close-fitting tunic of some fleecy white skin, which left all her limbs in perfect freedom, with curls of the brightest golden hair floating behind her, was gazing at him, not twenty feet above him, from the most wonderful dark-blue eyes he had ever seen.

But the most singular part of her attire was the head-dress that crowned those bright curls, a cap made of the head of the mountain-sheep, and carrying the same huge curling horns, which descended to the wearer's shoulders. In one hand she held the bugle which she had just sounded, and the other bore a double-pointed spear, which she seemed to use as an alpenstock.

As soon as Belcour could speak, he ejaculated, in his native tongue, the words:

"Grand Dieu! Who and what art thou?"

The strange girl answered not in words, but pointed up the pass, and waved him away, forbiddingly.

"Nay! I will not go!" cried the ardent Frenchman, impetuously. "I will never go till I know thee better, bright, beautiful spirit! Tell me who thou art!"

For all answer the girl went to the side of the cross canon, and stood at the edge of the dizzy precipice. Then she waved him back once more forbiddingly, and made as if to leap into the black gulf.

"In God's name, hold!" cried Belcour, frantically, and he hastily leaped from his horse, as if he would spring across the chasm that separated them.

The next moment the white figure leaped from the summit of the precipice into the depths of the black canon, and disappeared from his view.

And not a sound disturbed the stillness of the mountain-side, but the swash and roar of the torrent below him.

"Ah! mon Dieu, I have killed her!" groaned Belcour, as she disappeared.

He rushed madly down the slope to the waterfall, and looked up the line of the cross canon.

Not a living thing met his view, but a deep black pool at the very edge of the waterfall seemed to show him the grave of the unfortunate girl, and Gustave shuddered all over.

"So young, so beautiful!" he groaned; "and I have killed her!"

At that very instant the wild, solemn notes of the horn came to his ear from a fresh quarter.

He turned round, in greater amazement than ever, to see whence it came, and faintly ejaculated:

"Grand Dieu! It must be a spirit."

The waterfall at whose edge he stood was at least a hundred feet in depth, and emptied into a tremendous gorge, a continuation of the one he was in, but far grander. Cliffs six hundred feet in height shut in the gorge on each side, and below all was pitch dark, while above stunted trees clung to the crevices of the rocks, and climbed toward the narrow strip of sky.

Standing on a jagged, stunted tree, dead and bare of leaves, that shot out horizontally from the midst of the cliff, stood the mysterious white figure of the girl, waving her spear forbiddingly at him.

Belcour impudently extended his arms to her, crying:

"Oh, beautiful creature, do not stay there! You will fall and be dashed to pieces. For Heaven's sake, hear me!"

No sooner had he uttered the words than the white figure leaped from the bare tree into the giddy void like a bird, and seemed to swing herself with perfect ease to another tree at least a hundred feet distant.

Then, as if to cap the climax, she turned and disappeared into the solid rock, into whose bosom she vanished as if she had never been there, and all that Belcour could see was the bare mountain-side, with the spike-like trunks shooting out here and there, and a vulture winging its way across the strip of sky above.

With a strange sensation of awe and bewilderment, the young man turned round, forgetting even his dead game, climbed up the path, mounted his horse and galloped away.

His superstition was at last excited.

"It must be the Spirit of the Sierra that the Indians told us of," he muttered. "No mortal creature could leap a hundred feet from tree to tree."

And he never ceased his rapid gallop till he was out of the dark shadows of the solemn mountains, and into the free valley of the South Park.

There at last he tried to shake off the feeling of terror that had overcome him, and galloped as fast as he could to the live-oak tree where his friends were watching for him.

With pale face and trembling accents he ejaculated:

"Mes amis, I have seen the Spirit of the Sierra!"

CHAPTER III.

THE ROCK RIDER.

At the moment when Belcour left the mountains and galloped up to the live-oak tree, he was beheld, miles away, by an eye whose keenness few, red or white, could equal.

A man of remarkable light, exaggerated by his excessive leanness, stood at the entrance of a dark cave, that opened into a short gully, high up the side of the sierra.

His face, with great burning blue eyes, high aquiline features, thin to emaciation and framed in straight black hair, with mustaches of very great length, strongly resembled the portraits of the famous knight of La Mancha, both in outline and expression.

His figure, lank and bony, was equally in keeping, his dress that of the mountain hunters, but peculiarly tight and scanty in cut. On his head he wore a tall conical cap of fur, that increased his gigantic appearance, and he leaned on a long lance while he carefully scanned the valley below.

"This singular-looking man was soliloquizing in a low voice as he gazed.

"Strangers in the valley once more, and I never thought to see human face again, save poor, faithful Cato, and the red lords of the prairie. They must be mad to come here thus, when the chiefs of the South make their path through the very place where they are sitting. Must I never rest from my labors? I thought so fondly that Heaven would send me my child, could I but remain one year without slaughter, and now I see the red blood coming in floods, and I must bathe in it once more, to save my own color."

His great, solemn eyes glared with the light of madness as he spoke the last words, and he suddenly threw himself flat on the ground, and seemed to listen intently. In a moment more he started up, crying:

"I knew it! My visions never deceived me; and last night I heard the voice of the Spirit calling to me: 'Ride! ride! Blood comes!'"

He seemed to be dreadfully excited, for his senses, sharpened by insanity, had caught the sound of hoofs far away among the passes of the Sierra. He called aloud: "Cato! Cato! Bring out Mountaineer, quick! The Rock Rider must be at his red work again, for the heathen are about, and I am the protector of the helpless."

In answer to the call came stamping out of the cave a figure about as different from the other as could be imagined: a short, stout negro, with bandy legs, who appeared to be as strong as a bull, and carried on his shoulders a broad, good-humored face, generally on the grin.

Now, however, it bore an expression of superstitious terror, ludicrous to see, and the whites of the eyes showed plainly in their wide glare, as he ejaculated:

"Oh, marse cappen! Oh, de Lord, sweet marse cappen! Is you gwine away again wid dem horrible debil? Oh, marse cappen, don't ye do it, ef ye lub old Cato! Oh, marse cappen, you doesn't know nuffin 'bout how I feels when you is gwine away, and dem awful lookin' heads is a-lookin' at me all de time wid deir shiny eyes, and grins wid deir teeth and groans so—ohhh! Marse cappen, don't ye go, or else take me wid ye." And Cato fell on his knees by the side of the gaunt man, shivering as if he had the ague.

The other looked down on him with a strange look, in which pity and remorse seemed to be blended with some overmastering purpose.

"Poor child of clay," he said, "knowest thou not that when the tale of heads is complete, thou and I shall be free again, and once more see our darling? I would that I could let thee go with me, but thou knowest our enemies. The crafty wolf and the filthy buzzard would crowd to the feast, and our heads would be gone forever, if we both left. No, 'tis thy place to guard the Cavern of Death 'tis mine to bring in the victims, for I am the avenger of innocent blood. Bring out my charger, for I must ride forth."

He ended in a sterner tone of voice, with a slight frown, and Cato rose up, still trembling, and disappeared into the cavern. In a few minutes he returned, leading a tall mule, at least sixteen hands in height, of the same lank conformation as its master.

It was saddled and bridled, and the tall man mounted it slowly, and then sat there, looking at Cato for a minute.

"Cato," he said, gravely, "it is the duty of a true squire to follow his knight, if so be there is a castellan to guard the castle. I have promoted thee, boy. Thou art castellan. See to my castle. Bring me my buckler."

Once more poor Cato fell on his knees imploringly.

"Oh, marse cappen, not dat, for de lub of heaven. Ask Cato anything but dat. Dat ar ugly ting wid de dead face on him, he send de cold shudders all troo me, and when you gets him you goes—oh! de Lord knows whar!—and I nebber sees you any more. Yah! marse cappen, don't look so dreadful!"

"The buckler, dog! The buckler, or I pin thee to the rock!" suddenly vociferated the other, raising the long lance in anger; and Cato as suddenly leaped up, and vanished into the cavern as nimbly as a squirrel. In a moment more he reappeared, bearing, with averted face, a large round Indian shield of buffalo-hide, which was so unusually thick as to show that two of them had been bound together.

But the ornament in the center of the shield was of the most ghastly character conceivable. It was the face of a dead woman, pinched and white, with wide-open, staring eyes, and teeth revealed by parted lips. A few locks of gray hair were neatly parted on the forehead, and it seemed as if the whole mask of the face had been set on the shield, preserved as a mummy, for a real face, and of a white woman, it undoubtedly was.

The strange being on the gaunt mule took the shield from the hands of his sable attendant, and regarded the dead face silently for several minutes. Gradually the tears began to roll down his cheeks, and his gaunt features worked convulsively.

"Cato," he said, in a deep, broken voice, "this face, now withered and gray, was once the face of a bright, blooming girl. One night changed it to this. Some men would have revenged such wrongs on the whole race that had wronged him, but she had told me not to take life, save only in a righteous quarrel, to save life. Cato, I have obeyed her, and God has taken care of me. While this shield covers me, all the red-men of the Sierra can not harm me, for they know the white face of her whom they have wronged. So God defend the right."

And he deliberately pressed his lips to those of the dead face, with a strange expression of religious fervor, mingled with knightly enthusiasm.

Cato shuddered and groaned, as he saw his master do it, and then the other threw the shield over his left arm, and cried:

"Now, I am again the Rock Rider of the Sierra, and let all the sons of the prairie beware! Forward!"

The gaunt mule set off at once at a round trot down the gully, and turned sharp off to the right, where the way seemed impassable to any but a mountain goat.

But, as if used to it, the animal kept up the same rapid pace, leaping from rock to rock, and bounding over chasms that seemed madness to attempt.

And all the while the gaunt figure of the Rock Rider sat erect, with shield and lance, like a knight of old, regardless of the eccentric movements of his mount, and with seat undisturbed, till he had arrived at the summit of a cliff, looking down into a dark gorge that entered the valley.

Then he halted and surveyed the gorge with a grim smile.

"I knew it," he said. "A party of twenty or thirty Indians, all evidently chiefs, from their rich dresses, were descending the gorge into the South Park."

The Rock Rider reined up, and elevated his stentorian voice in the Comanche language, crying:

"The sons of the prairie are lost in the mountain. Back to your homes, or meet the wrath of the Rock Rider!"

Then with a wheel of the gaunt mule, he held up to their view the round shield, so that the face of the dead woman glared down on the chiefs.

(To be continued.)

Iron and Gold:

OR, THE NIGHT-HAWKS OF ST. LOUIS.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "THE TALENTED MR. RAY," "BLACK CRES-
CENT," "HOOVER," "HERCULES," "THE
HUNCHBACK," "PEARL OF PEARS,"
"THE RED SCORPION," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORDS OF FATE.

"Oh, ye, whose cheek the tear of pity stings,
Draw near with pious reverence and attend."
—BURNS.

THERE was a peculiarly significant expression in the narrow face of Theophilus Omnorann as he opened the slide in the panel of the door, and said:

"Look! do you think she will live long?"

He long, skinny finger pointed in at the solitary occupant of the room, and his keen, spectacled eyes fixed hard upon Wilbur Kearn.

The latter stepped quickly forward, and placed his face to the opening.

The apartment was handsomely furnished; but it was a prison—for the windows were barred across, and the door was heavily locked.

Near the center of the room, at a work-table, sat a bent and shriveled form—a Quakeron woman, who was well on toward the completion of a century of years.

Her face was sickeningly attenuated by age; teeth she had none; there was scarce sufficient flesh to cover the bones; a mere living thing, and nothing more—save that, as if time had seen fit to spare one relic of youthful beauty, a mass of jetty hair fell, like a volume of silken thread, over her pointed shoulders, and down nearly to the floor.

She had been working with knitting-needles, when the sound of coming feet fell upon her ear; and now she ceased, letting the weird song die on her lips, while she listened attentively.

"Beula! Beula!" cried Wilbur Kearn. Slowly she turned her head; but she did not look at the man who uttered her name, for she was sightless. The two eyes were sunk deep into the head in blindness; and they were eyes that had, in earlier years, shone with all the lustre of gems.

"Beula! Beula!" he cried, again, "I am here once more. Hear me. Answer me. Where—where is my child? Where is Olse?"

She arose from the chair, and took a step toward the door—pausing, and gathering up those long, rich tresses, as if they were her jealous care; and, while she wound the black mass round her throat, she croaked:

"It's Wilbur Kearn! It's Wilbur Kearn! O-h-o! Wilbur Kearn!"

"Yes, yes, it is I, Beula. I am here, as I have been so often before, to beg, to implore you—tell me, tell me—where is my child?"

The blind woman rocked from limb to limb, and the sightless orbs were turned upon him.

"O-h-o! your child? Ha! ha! he! he!—yes, you've a child, a pretty child. But, where will you find her?—ho! h-o! I know! I know!"

"Beula, tell me! By all the kindness ever shown you in this world, by your hopes of going to Heaven when you die, I invoke you take this load of misery from my breast! Oh! could you but see me!—could you but know the grief that's in my heart! Tell me, Beula—tell me—where is my child?"

The withered creature grinned.

"No use! No use!" answered the croaking voice. "Remember—remember the words of fate!"

"Those words of fate!"

"Ay, ay, the words of fate!"

"Oh, God! I know not what they mean."

"I have told you what they mean," whispered the physician, in Wilbur's ear.

"No, no; they can not—"

"But they do," and the whisper was almost a hiss; "so be warned, ere it is too late. She will go off suddenly, and that very soon. If I am not able to swear to her, that the prophecy is fulfilled, then the secret will die with her."

"Merciful Heaven pity me!" groaned Kearn, in an agony of spirit.

Just then came the blind woman's voice again.

"Hear, Wilbur Kearn!—hear the words of fate!"

"One twice wedded, wife of two,
Child by each, and a child that's lost:
One who never father knew,
And one that's on life's billows tost."

Marry the first to him who tried
To win the widow whose first love died;
Then will the last one be restored,
And halm on sorrow's wounds be poured."

"Ho—ho! the words of fate! Go, Wilbur Kearn, and mark them well."

She turned and felt her way back to the chair, resuming her work with the needles, and starting afresh the song they had interrupted.

"Beula! Beula! In the name of mercy, relieve an old man of his woe! Oh! has your heart turned to stone?—when you stand upon the very brink of death!—when you know that you must soon go before your God! Do this one act of kindness, of justice ere you die. Beula!" and he almost screamed the words, while he clasped his

hands, and a flood of tears gushed over his cheeks, "will you not tell me where she is?—my child?"

But the woman worked steadily on, only shaking her head, and raising her song to a louder key.

One moment he stared wildly at the blind being who held the secret he so longed to learn; then, with one great moan, like the wail of Winter in its sighful sweep, he sunk backward into the arms of Doctor Omnorann.

The physician calmly caught the insensible form, and sustained it, while he refastened the slide.

Then he half dragged Kearn along the hall, down the stairs, and into his office, where he laid him upon the sofa.

Dismissing the mulatto girl, he applied himself ardently to the task of restoring the stricken man to consciousness.

And while thus engaged, he was muttering, lowly:

"What's the use? He might as well try to file sawdust off a rainbow as to get that secret without complying with the conditions."

He hitched his chair close to the sofa on which Kearn lay.

Pretty soon the latter opened his eyes. With the physician's aid, he sat up; though his head drooped forward to his hands, and his elbows rested on his knees.

"Feel any better?" inquired Omnorann, very low, mildly.

"I don't know—what was the matter?" absently.

"Oh, why, you fainted, that's all. The same as you always do when you go up to see Beula, and learn that there's no use of fighting against this thing."

The words had the effect of warming Kearn's blood. He raised his head and gazed at the doctor, though that gaze was wavering.

"Man!—man! oh, if you are a man, and not the demon you would seem to be—are you not satisfied with what you have done? See these tears! Look at me: trembling, weak, despairing."

"Now, friend Kearn, be reasonable." He drew out a penknife, and began paring his nails, wisely attentive to his own scientific use of the blade.

"You heard the 'words of fate,' didn't you?"

"Yes—yes," in a subdued tone; "they are a mystery to me."

"I have endeavored to make them plain."

"No, no, no; impossible."

"Wilbur Kearn," with a slow, measured, emphatic accent, "let me impress it upon you, for the last time: 'until you arrange it so that I shall marry Zella, you will never learn from Beula's lips where to find your own child. I say 'your own,' because it is not generally known that Zella is your step-daughter—she having assumed your name at her mother's death. Now, what I say is just as sure as aggravated measles are ugly!"

"No—no; you are old enough to be her father!"

"A matter of no material difference, as your own knowledge of every-day occurrences will show you," argued the Doctor, quietly, and filing industriously at a sharp corner on his thumb-nail.

"Moreover," he added, after a short pause, "there's another item you seem to forget. You know well enough that you are troubled with a hereditary affection of the heart. Um! well, what's the use? You'll drop off before you can wink; and if, by any possible chance, you should get to heaven, you'll have to wait there another indefinite time before you see your lost child. Comprehend? Now, be sensible."

"Theophilus Omnorann, I believe it was you who stole my child from me, to glut your hatred for a rival—although you have sworn to me that you did not—"

"Ha! ha! ha!" interrupted Omnorann,—"a very low laugh, perhaps I did, after all. But, if I did, friend Kearn, you may rely upon it—I haven't the most remote idea where she is now."

Kearn's eyes lighted with an angry emotion; he glared upon the man before him—so calm, so taunting; then, while his fingers worked convulsively, he sprang up and forward.

"O-h! monster!"

Omnorann did not fear him, physically, yet, to avoid an unpleasant scene that was imminent, he slid out of and behind his chair, on the back of which he grasped and leamed, as he said:

"Be careful, friend Kearn—now, be careful. Excitement is very dangerous for a man who has heart disease!"

Even as he spoke, the other paused with a cry that lingered in his throat, and clapping one hand to his side, staggered back onto the sofa.

But the pain was only momentary.

Omnorann was about to resume his seat, and also his play with the man who was virtually in his power, when there came a sharp rap on the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

TOO LATE! TOO LATE!

"Giv' st but one look, sweetheart!
A word—no more!
It is music's sweetest part,
Where lips run o'er!"

"Tis a part I fain would learn,
So pr'ise here thy lessous turn,
And teach me, to the close,
All Love's pleasure—all its woes!"
—CONSWALL.

It was the day following that of Kearn's visit to the physician in the city.

Father and daughter were upon the rose-embowered porch, at their fairy-like home; the first seated on a rustic bench—with Zella, as when we first introduced her to the reader, kneeling beside him, and toying with her usual favorites, a bouquet of flowers.

She dearly loved the many plants that bloomed so gaudily around her exiled home—they were her especial care, her bright companions; it was rare to see her without a blossom or bud arranged in her bosom, or amid the jetty ringlets that clustered on her brow; and she little dreamed how near in the future was the time when she would part with these, and other loved associations, that cheered her solitude.

Wilbur Kearn was paler than on the day gone. Lines of sadness were traced across his features, and his eyes were restless, weary, wandering.

"Pa, I don't think your visit to town yesterday did you much good."

He was thinking so deeply as to be half-oblivious to his child's presence.

The abruptness of her speech startled him slightly.

"Why?" he asked, after a brief silence, and still gazing out over the broad picture of beauty that spread before him.

"Because you look tired and sleepy and

worried, and—do you know, pa, I sometimes think you are dreadfully bothered about something—something here, I mean," tapping her finger a couple of times on her forehead. "Now, what is it, I'd like to know?"

Carelessly as she spoke, the words caused him another start, and he moved uneasily.

"Only your imagination," he returned, evasively.

"Where did you go to?"

"To—I called on Doctor Omnorann."

Kearn answered, with a hesitating manner, and his lips compressed, his teeth shut together forcibly, as he thought of his interview with the physician.

"I don't like that man!" declared Zella. "He looks so singular. And when he was here, a month ago, he watched me all the time, through those ugly green spectacles, as if he wanted to eat me up! Ha! ha! ha! he's a very odd person, I think. But, pa—what makes you go to see him so often?"

"You ask too many questions, Zella."

"There it is again!" she exclaimed, with a pout. "You ask lately as if I hadn't a right to ask questions. Ayho! what a wretched life!"

"Zella!" He uttered the one word reproachfully, and glanced down into her half-averted face.

"Oh, don't be angry!" she laughed. "I didn't mean any thing."

"Look! here comes some one."

"It's Mr. Winfield."

The young man was approaching slowly along the path. He did not see the pair, for his head was hung, and his step was thoughtful.

"

It was a brief hesitation; in another moment he was at her side.

"You called me, Zella?"

Something was struggling within her. She would speak, yet could not; her face, ever angel-like, was now twice Heavenly, and crimsoned by a blush that glowed to her very temples.

Then, softly—while her two arms glided timidly round his neck, and the dark eyes raised dreamily to his—she murmured:

"Don't go yet. Oh! Mr. Winfield, you have taught me to love you! Stay—say you will not go."

No longer a childlike, thoughtless girl—but a woman, with a woman's greatest passion aroused, and her whole being absorbed in a wild, idolizing affection!

He gazed at her with a vacant, half-unearthly expression; and as the confession came from her lips, he could have shrieked in the terrible misery that gripped his heart.

Too late! Too late! rung the voice of conscience; and while he met the glance of the pure, beautiful girl who had now laid bare the most sacred secret of her bosom, his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and his lips remained shut, as if they were glued, and pressed upon by an invisible hand.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEST OF IRON.

"Thy life was all one oath of love to me! Sworn to me daily, hourly, by thine eyes!"

—KNOWLES.

"Oh! ye who cast away a heart's deep love, Remember, ere affection disappears, That keen, reproachful sob of your soul may move, Like his who lives to mourn life's early years." —LAWSON.

We must not censure Zella for her avowed affection for Hugh Winfield.

His many pretty speeches, his more than ordinary attentions, his ardent glances, and, above all, the fatal kiss which he bestowed the day previous, when warned by the irresistible influence of that fascination for which he could find no name, and which he could not shake off—all these had had their effect upon the tender susceptibilities of the young girl's heart, until, in her full nature, she could almost have yielded up her very soul to a sacrifice to the man around whose neck she now clung.

What, to her, were the unbidden features of the action?—if it be unbidden for an honest passion to break its imprisoning chains and seek responsive sentiment? She was blind to everything, save this deep, deep, uncontrollable feeling.

She only knew she loved him, and that he must know it.

"Don't go yet, Hugh—stay a little longer."

"Oh, God! what have I done?" he moaned, as his own head sunk to that which nestled so confidently on his breast—nestled there as if its owner already felt how he was worshipping her, and as if he had wooed her and won her sacred promises, in so many lover's words.

Something was choking in his throat. Great tears started to his eyes; his voice, for a time, deserted him, when he had uttered that speech of agony.

How could he give her up, now?

But he thought of his father, of the ruin that stared them in the face, and of his resolution to save the sinking parent. For several seconds, two mighty loves were battling within him—his heart was bleeding while the conflict raged.

Then came the summoning of iron.

"Zella! Zella! I am a miserable, heartless wretch!"

She looked up at him, in surprise, but said nothing.

"Oh! forgive me, Zella."

"Forgive you?" she repeated, inquiringly.

"I do not deserve your love!—I do not deserve it!"

"Why, Hugh?" and the dark eyes gazed wonderingly into his pallid face.

"Zella!—Heaven pity me!—you should, rather, hate me. I do love you, Zella—ay, more, I know, than man ever loved woman. But, I—came to-day—to see you for the last time, to bid you good-by, forever! And I had hoped—Oh! how I prayed—that I had never done, or spoken, anything to win more than your friendship. But—too late!—too late!"

Tighter grew the girl, wider grew the eyes, as the startled ears half interpreted his meaning.

"I can never, never ask you to be mine, Zella!" he fairly sobbed, for men can weep, when their whole being is torn by such overwhelming woe of spirit.

The face on his breast grew pale as death; the hand that lay upon his shoulder began to tremble.

Lower, lower, sunk the shapely head, with its wealth of jetty curls; yet, though there was a cutting pain tearing at the now hopeless heart, not a word, not a sound came from the nearly bloodless lips.

"Zella!—speak to me!"

Silence itself was unbearable.

"I thought, Hugh—ugh—ugh—you acted as if you did. And I could not help loving you." Her voice was hushed, and full of an unearthly calmness.

"I do love you!—I do! Can you believe me guilty as I would seem?—oh! I can you think I would be guilty of a willful plot against your peace? There is a cruel barrier between us. I can not wed with you—and do you think I say it with a mind at rest? Hear me, though: I swear to you, if ever that barrier is broken, I'll seek you out, if the search leads me to the utmost corner of the world!—and claim you for my own, if you are not already wedded. Try not to hate me, Zella; though I deserve that you should. Farewell—farewell!" He almost rudely displaced her embrace, and ran from her.

He durst not stay another moment, else all the iron resolve within him could not have resisted the promptings of his passionate adoration!

Zella stood there, motionless as a statue, looking after his fleeing form.

When he had vanished, the dark orbs glistened, and burning tears trickled slowly down her cheeks.

"Oh! Hugh—Hugh! why did you ever teach me to love you? Why did we ever meet? Yes—I can forgive you—but I can not forget—no, I can not forget. I will never be happy again!—never!—never!" A low, plaintive murmur, broken by the great, throbbing emotion which made the budding bosom heave, and toned the voice to a son of sadness.

"Hugh, my son, you will save me?"

Cyrus Winfield met Hugh, as the latter was ascending the stairs to his room, after returning from his painful visit to Zella Kearn.

"Yes, father, yes," impatiently; and he

would have continued on, but Winfield sen.

"And, Hugh—let it happen as soon as possible—as soon as possible; will you?"

The girl loved you. There'll be no difficulty, I know. I have heavy notes to meet, one month from to-day; and I can't 'realize' on any thing. I've not got a hundred dollars to my name! Say you will be expeditious with the affair?"

"I will make all haste I can," answered the young man, shutting his teeth hard, and speaking the words as firmly as he could.

Great indeed was the sacrifice about to be made in the interests of this ruined, mind-racked, half-crazed old man—a sacrifice that made Hugh feel himself a very villain, while it called for the yielding up of brightest hopes, and the cruel banishment of true love's holiest, most cherished idol.

"You will go to see Hilde Wyn at once?"

"—to-night?" pursued Winfield sen, in an anxious, uneven tone.

"Yes, father, I will go to-night," returned the girl, with a smile.

"You are a noble boy, Hugh!—a noble boy! God bless you!" He grasped his son's hand and wrung it with grateful fervor.

"Perhaps not so noble as you think, father," said Hugh, with an intense bitterness which the parent could not understand.

"Yes, you are noble. You will save me yet. God bless you!" cried the old man.

"I will try to save you."

The young man hastily continued his ascent of the stairs. For the effect of this scene was to conduce toward an increase of his melancholy and wretchedness.

On the landing he met a shadowy, timid form coming down—a form that stepped aside, as if it would be unnoticed by every one.

But he paused.

"Mother?"

"Hugh," returned the loved voice of her whose name he uttered in a tone that was sadly faint and tremulous.

Mrs. Winfield had long suspected the charm that drew her son to the cottage home; her mother's perception was quick to perceive that Hugh's heart leaned strongly thitherward; and none so readily share the feelings of joy or sorrow, in man, as that one whose name is sacred, even on the lips of the most brutal and depraved—"mother."

Knowing, as she did, the condition of things, and partaking of her son's unhappiness, she had hardly courage to look at him, lest fresh sorrow should ensue.

But he raised the mild, sweet face to his lips, and imprinted a kiss on her pale brow; then passed on, without another word.

Cyrus Winfield stood in the parlor, with the afternoon paper in his hands, reading a thrilling account of the bold robbery on the night previous.

For, through the servants, it had reached outsiders, and the ever-watchful reporters soon seized it.

It was pretty generally known in the business community that Cyrus Winfield had met with heavy losses, recently, and that he was never so pinched in money matters as now; and the journal, in its comments, while it deplored the occurrence, contained a caustic prophecy, that the loss—several thousands—would probably exert a harassing influence in the merchant's outstanding business ventures, and present liabilities. Besides, it was covertly hinted that a man who would deposit so much money in so unsafe a place had but met with the natural consequences of his carelessness.

"Yes, yes, I see how it is!" he cried, crunching the paper in a nervous grip; "they feel cheerful over my loss. They are envious of my past prosperities; they think I am utterly ruined and broken down—and now bite and snarl at me like curs at the hole of a hunted hare! But they are mistaken. Ha! ha! ha!"—a jerky, hollow laugh—they have reckoned too quick. I shall be saved!—saved! Then see them come back, licking the ground I tread, fawning for favor! Hugh will marry Hilde Wyn. She will be glad enough to exchange her money for the position such a marriage will bring her. She loves the boy!—she loves him wildly! I could see that in every word she spoke of him. And Hugh will act with speed—Cyrus Winfield will soon be sold again! Ha! ha! ha!"

And up-stairs, in the solitude of his room, Hugh was sitting where he had sat in the morning, when conversing with his friend.

Thoughts again!—deep, awful, burning thoughts were flitting through his heated brain, weaving unrest and despair.

Suddenly, he started. The surroundings recalled an item which had slipped his memory in the keener excitement of the day.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed: "now I think of it! the eyes I saw in Zella Kearn, when the pure girl clung to me, are the eyes I saw last night before my senses deserted me, in the strangling grip of the ruffian! Those eyes!—how the idea haunts me!—yes, I could swear to it! Oh! what maze, what fearful suspicion is this? It can not be—it can not be!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 143.)

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE SPIRIT LAKE AVENGERS.

BY OLL COOMES, AUTHOR OF "HAWKEYE HARRY," "BOY SPY," "IRONSIDES," "THE SCOUT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PHANTOM HORSEMAN.

OLD INKPADUCAH was at last safe with his tribe, so he thought. He had long before heard of the natural advantages of this valley for an encampment, and growing uneasy under the punishments that threatened him in the Territory of Iowa, he had taken up his line of march for this valley, which he found equalled in every respect the reports he had heard of it.

Through the center of the village a little stream found its way, while along the base of the hills was a belt of shrubbery and rich, succulent grass that furnished good pasture for their animals, so they had only to leave the valley to secure game for food.

The escarpment of hills that partially surrounded the village ran high above the tops of the forest trees and was outlined against the sky like the summit of some

grim old battlement. A bird could not move athwart its summit without being seen by those in the valley below.

On the second night after their entrance to the valley, the head men of the tribe were assembled in council near the center of the town. They had met simply for congratulation—to rejoice and talk over their new and impregnable defense, and the glory that seemed opening to the tribe, in their escape from their hated enemies and from the terrible Death-Notch.

Foremost in the council was Le Subtile Fox, who, as the reader has no doubt already inferred, was Pirate Paul, though he went disguised. His words still seemed to have great weight in their council, and he was now listened to as one possessed of the powers of prophecy; for once he had told them that the day would soon come when they would be forever free from the persecutions of their enemies in a beautiful valley far away, and although they now believed they were in that valley, La Subtile Fox had reference in his prophecy to the valley of Death, where their enemies seemed fast hurrying them.

"When does the white chief return to the village of the pale-faces?" asked Inkpaducah of the pirate.

"I shall go soon," replied La Subtile Fox.

"And what will you do with the white squaw that calls you husband?"

"Leave her in your care," replied the villain.

The chief was about to reply, when a low exclamation without the tent arrested their attention.

They arose from their seats and hurried near the edge. The moon was up and shining brightly.

"What is the cause of this commotion?"

Pirate Paul asked of the sentinel on guard at the door of the council-lodge.

"Look there!" replied the sentinel, pointing away toward the summit of the escarpment to the northward of the town.

Every eye was turned in the direction indicated, and along the crest of the hills that were outlined against the clear, starry sky, they beheld a single horseman riding at a wild, furious speed. They could hear the clear, sharp ring of each hoof-stroke upon the stony path. They could see the flashing of a spear-head in the moonlight. They could see the horseman's tall plumes nodding about his head and naked shoulders, and from these they knew he was a friend.

The watchers in the valley permitted their eyes to follow him along the ridge until it dipped down below the dark horizon.

Then they awaited his coming. He came near in sight. He was terribly excited, and his heat was white with foam and in the last stages of exhaustion.

"Why, Ahlah, ride so fast?" asked Le Subtile Fox, as he drew rein near the council-lodge.

"Ahlah," replied the Indian, "has seen terrible things. The village of the Sioux is in the valley of the Hobbamock. Look yonder!"

The savages looked in the direction indicated, and saw a number of horsemen appearing in sight. They were riding, or as it seemed, floating along the summit of the escarpment.

The savages stood awe-stricken, terrified. There was something unearthly in the appearance of these horsemen. The hoof-strokes of their animals gave forth no sound, while both horse and rider seemed like beings of giant proportions—like Titan phantoms galloping through the air. Had their horses' hoofs produced the least sound, they might have believed they were of earth; but the absence of sound, when they had heard the hoof-strokes of their friend's horse so sharply, and the colossal proportions of both man and beast, were enough to fill every heart with misgivings.

The savages watched the strange apparitions gallop along the heights in silence; then, as they dropped from view against the dark horizon, there followed a silence equal to that of death. But it was soon broken by a low cry that wafted out, striking every heart with terror. The sound came from the north side of the town, and as the terrors of the moment subsided—when the last of the phantom-giants had faded into darkness—other sounds were heard issuing from the same side of the village, and soon a low cry was raised that ran from mouth to mouth, and the name Death-Notch quivered in accents of terror on every lip!

Then came a runner to the council-lodge with the startling news that Death-Notch had been in the village and had slain a warrior.

The chiefs shuddered with terror, and Le Subtile Fox grew uneasy with a strange fear. Their supposed security and freedom from that terrible young Scalp Hunter was, after all, a vain hope, and he was still haunting their trail.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A PIPE OF PEACE.

BACK in the woods some two miles from the Indian village, was a large tree whose branching boughs and pendent creepers gave it more the appearance of a huge banyan than an oak.

Numerous parasites, such as the wild grapevine, wild cucumber, and wild ivy had scrambled up the trunk of the tree, and creeping out upon the branches to their extremities had inclined downward to the earth again, thus forming a curtain of green foliage around the tree, and an inclosure of several yards in diameter. This inclosure presented the interior appearance of a huge pavilion, the tree-trunk representing the central pole.

Within the walls of this natural inclosure were grouped seven persons. They sat before a small fire whose light revealed their faces and the expressions of anxiety upon them. It was a part of our friends, the Avengers.

Two of the band stood on guard outside of their retreat; these were Omaha and Old Shadow. In the background stood nine horses bridled and saddled, and their dripping flanks told that they had been ridden hard and fast, and that quite recently. Their hoofs were muffled in pieces of woolen blankets, that were wrapped around and under the hoofs, and confined at the pastern.

All the Avengers were present except Ralph St. Leger, and for him they now waited. He had gone to the village of the Sioux to make a reconnaissance, and learn, if possible, whether Vida and Sylvien were held captives there.

The night was far advanced when he returned. His face, as he appeared before his companions, wore an expression of sadness and disappointment which Fred Travis readily interpreted to himself.

"You are back safe, young friend," said Amos Meredith, as Ralph made his appearance under the oak.

"I believe so," replied St. Leger, with a smile.

"Did you succeed in getting into the Indian village?" asked another.

"Yes; I spent all of half an hour wandering about in the place without detection."

"Doggone wonder ye didn't git yerself set up, with a dig in the ribs," remarked Old Shadow.

"I would not have stood much chance had the Indians not been so busy watching the phantom horsemen."

"Phantom horsemen? What do you mean?"

"The horsemen that galloped with muffled hoofs along the ridge."

"You allude to us?"

"Yes. The savages saw you riding along the rocky heights and became terror-stricken. I saw you myself, and I must admit you presented a wonderful appearance. Outlined against the sky, you seemed magnified into beings ten-fold your size, and as the muffled hoofs of your horses produced no sound, you appeared like giant phantoms in the air; and it was a fortunate occurrence for me, for I was getting into pretty close quarters about that time."

A low, silent laugh followed Ralph's story. The Avengers had ridden along the ridge in order to reach the point where they now were. They had muffled their animals' feet that the sounds of their hoofs would not be heard, never once dreaming of being brought out so prominent against the sky to the savages' eyes.

"Well," said Fred Travis, burning with impatience to hear from his darling Vida, "what discovery did you make? Are they—the girls—there?"

Ralph bit his lips, as if to keep back some inward emotion. For a moment he was silent, then he replied:

"No, they are not there."

The features of young Travis became clouded with disappointment, and for a moment a deathlike silence pervaded the place.

Death-Notch was the first to speak.

"No; Vida and Sylvien are not there. But there are other white female captives there, and among them is a young woman whom I have seen at Stony Cliff, and whom Sylvien called Martha Gregory. The others are no doubt captives taken at the Spirit Lake Massacre, and of whom you and your friends are in search."

"No doubt of it! no doubt of it!" exclaimed several of the Avengers, and the muttered words of sister, mother, or friend, might have been heard spoken in whispered accents.

The youths were free in expressing hopes of the speedy release of their friends. But how were they to do it? This was the question that passed from lip to lip without an answer.

There was not a doubt in the minds of Death-Notch and Fred but that Vida and Sylvien had been slain. If not, where were they? There was nothing that admitted of a hope of their having escaped from their captors, and a new spirit of vengeance seemed to have fired the hearts of both the youths. Still they did not give way to despair entirely. They thought the maidens might possibly have been hidden away somewhere, or that Ralph had missed them in the village; and, after some deliberation as to their future course, they came to a conclusion that was likely, if successful, to give them some information. It was to release Martha Gregory and learn from her whether Sylvien and Vida had been taken captives by Inkpaducah's warriors; if so, she could give some clue to their absence.

But the great difficulty would be in effecting Miss Gregory's release. It would be impossible for them to gain admission to the valley; however, they resolved to wait and watch their chances.

They spent the remainder of that night under that great, green pavilion of nature, and the following morning, at an early hour, they were in the saddle, and moving further away from the Indian village, for daylight would undoubtedly reveal their present location to the enemy.

A few miles north of the Indian town, the forest ended in a long expanse of prairie. The Avengers had just reached this plain, and were about debouching from the forest into it, when they made a discovery that caused them to draw rein instantly. Over two hundred Indian warriors were encamped on the edge of the prairie, not over thirty rods from them.

A single glance told our friends it was a war-party. Their horses were picketed near by, and their spears were aligned in a circle about their camp.

The hour was still that of early morn, and it was evident from their movements that the savages were preparing to move. They were dressed and painted in all the paraphernalia of the war-path, and were all young and athletic looking warriors. But they were not Sioux. There were those among our friends that could distinguish the warriors of three distinct tribes, the Omaha, the Sac and Fox tribes.

For fear of discovery, Fred Travis enjoined extreme silence upon his friends, but Omaha, seeing who the strangers were, heeded not this caution. Giving his animal the reins, he galloped from the woods and rode directly toward the enemy's camp, manifesting signs of friendship as he did so.

"By thunder, that red youngster 'll git the hull caboodle into trouble!" exclaimed Old Shadow.

"Let us see what he means," added Travis. The Avengers remained under cover of the woods, watching in breathless anxiety the result of Omaha's conference.

The Friendly rode into their camp, and was soon surrounded by the warriors. A short consultation ensued, when a shout from the lips of the savages pealed out to the air. It was a welcome shout, our friends knew Omaha had been received as a friend.

A moment later Omaha wheeled his horse, and riding back to where his companions awaited him, said:

"Let my white friends have no fear of the warriors yonder. They are our friends, and the enemies of the Sioux, and are marching upon their village. They will help the Avengers to rescue their friends."

The whites would have doubted the motive of the warriors had it been reported to them by any other than Omaha. But the red-skins could circumvent him, and, with a show of joy and thankfulness for such timely friendship, the little band rode from the woods and approached the red-skins' camp with open hands, significant of peace.

They were received in camp with no little ceremony of honor, taking it in an Indian view, and were welcomed with prolonged shouts.

The Avengers dismounted. Then the pipe of peace was brought out and smoked, and peace and friendship between the two parties were established.

A conference was now held, Omaha representing our friends and the leader of the savages the three tribes under his command. The rescue of their friends by the one party, and vengeance by the other, were the motives that had brought them there, yet they pledged themselves to work together.

When the conference broke up it was with the understanding that they were to attack the Sioux village the coming night; and that the position of the enemy's camp, and the passage leading into the valley, might be thoroughly understood, a scout from each party was sent out to make a reconnaissance of the topography of the valley.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 139.)

A Mad Adventure.

BY MARK WILTON.

THIRTY years ago, where now stands the bustling city of C—, there was only a feeble settlement, with barely a hundred inhabitants; and around the cluster of log cabins the forest stretched far away in every direction. And in the forest was every kind of wild animals—panthers, wolves, bears and deer, and others too numerous to mention.

This being the case, there were, of course, many hunters; but the most famous of these were the "Five Nimrods" as they were called. And I was one of the five. We were young, daring, reckless fellows, who lived from hand to mouth, not caring to lay by any thing for a rainy day. We lived for the present, and not for the future.

We were the most renowned of the hunters of C—; many a beast had fallen before our rifles; and of the fierce, gaunt wolves especially we had slain a great number.

These creatures were the scourges of the region, and it was a brave man who would traverse the forest after dark.

One night, when a score of us were in the bar-room of Sweetser's tavern, the conversation turned upon the tragic fate of a man who had endeavored to ride by night from C— to Elmtown, where his wife was sick; but the poor fellow had lost his life in the undertaking, only a few bones remaining to tell the fearful tale.

"Why," exclaimed Mr. Cavendish, the rich man of the place, "I'll bet a hundred and twenty-five dollars the 'Five Nimrods' would not dare to undertake the ride by night!"

"Done, by St. Peter!" exclaimed Dick Halton, who was our acknowledged leader; "we will ride the course, though it be to death!"

And we all echoed his words, for the twenty-five dollars each man would have, if we lived to claim the stake, was considered a large sum in those days. And, besides, there was the excitement of the thing; quite as great an inducement as the former one.

This being the case, the reader will not be surprised to learn that we were ready for the mad ride on the night of the following day. Ned Thorne furnished the team—a stout, swift pair of bays—and a sled, known as a "pung," and onto this we piled a large stock of arms, and were off on our fifteen-mile ride for Elmtown.

We rode away just at dark, followed by the good wishes of the villagers, and were soon speeding through the forest.

Thorne drove; Halton and Noll Trafford had the left-hand side of the sled, and Will Godfrey and I the right.

We could not have started under more auspicious circumstances. There was about three inches of snow, and the "slipping" was excellent, while the bays had never felt better. Ned set them into a steady trot, and for three miles our ride was quiet and delightful. Then from behind us rose a prolonged howl.

"There goes the rally-cry," said Dick, grimly.

And so it was, for when twice repeated, answering cries were heard all around, and we knew the wolves were on our track.

A mile further, and they began to collect in our rear, in twos, fours, and even in dozens, until a long, black line, clearly seen in the moonlight, swept swiftly after us.

We had no intention of wasting bullets until they came nearer, so we watched them in silence, Ned Thorne standing like a statue behind his horses, with a hand of iron on the lines.

But the wolves are constantly receiving fresh additions to their numbers, and now they press toward the sled till scarce a rod stretches between them and us. And so Dick gives the order to fire, and four brutes fall dead, to be instantly torn to pieces.

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The Superb Love Romance

MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

to commence in an early number of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, will be received with unquestioned delight. That very large constituency of readers who see in this lady one of the most brilliant, original and captivating of all American Female Novelists—a "bright particular Star"—have in

FLORIEN'S FORTUNE;

OR,

The False Widow's Scheme.

a work of intense dramatic interest of story, of character subtly drawn, and of plot charmingly conceived—all combining in an effect as impressive as it is powerful for the lesson it teaches—that no face or form, be it ever so beautiful, no talent be it ever so transcendent, can long pursue a career of wrong and avert the fate of the evil-doer. The story involves elements of uncommon interest in the antagonisms which grow out of two distinct lines of motive or ruling trait.

A Brave, Bad, Beautiful Woman

plays for another's Fortune, and strikes even at her own flesh and blood, yet so artful in all things that her mask is impenetrable. It is a masterly handling of a character that Rachel or Charlotte Cushman would have been proud to give it a stage personation, while in the peerless Florien, sweet Agnes Robertson or the spirituelle Nellson would have a superb prototype. Mrs. Burton, by this work, places herself beside the

BEST LIVING WRITERS OF FICTION.

Our Arm-Chair.

Chat.—When an author remits us his or her first attempt at writing for the press we are not provoked, for every author must make a beginning; but, when such first attempts are crude as a cobblestone fence and the writer has the presumption not only to ask us to read it but also to pay for it—why, we smile, although, sometimes, we are just on the point of invoking backhanded blessings. A very good rule to adopt for "first attempts" is to try them with your local press. If your own local paper can't stand the dose, be assured the editor of the popular weekly is your worst literary enemy, for he will smile so sardonically that Nephthys would grow jealous.

Great authors, we are told, as a general rule, are slow in composition and cautious about publication. Lord Bacon rewrote one of his works twelve times, and Swift stowed away his manuscript for several years, frequently revising before publication. Edmund Burke had his works printed three times on a private press, and thrice corrected before publication. "How would he figure in the editorial chair of some of our dailies of the present day?" asks a contemporary. He would not do for some dailies, that is certain, where good grammar is at a discount, and thoughtful care in thought and expression are out of favor. But, in all well-considered publications, a title of Burke's exquisite English is very welcome, and the author who emulates him and his style has a good model.

It is not now "just the thing" for a young lady to appear on the street or at public assemblies without a companion—an elderly lady, or, as known abroad, a chaperon. It is claimed by the exclusives that only the newly rich allow their daughters to accept invitations without being "matronized," and most rigid society people even attach the chaperone to any serious-minded young couple bent on attending church on an evening, while to go unmatronized to the opera or play, would be to brave the odds of a circle of snobs and promises. This is French style, where young girls are never permitted the freedom which here always has been conceded. And so, little by little, we are becoming Frenchified.

Howard Staunton, the English chess-player, and well known as a Shakespearean scholar, is now contributing a series of papers to the London *Albion* on supposed corruptions of Shakespeare's text. Not satisfied with what critics for two centuries have done to "amend" and revise the great poet's compositions, this Zealot is now boring like a beetle for "supposed" verbal and rhetorical shortcomings. The man who swears that no such person as Shakespeare ever lived is not so great a fool after all, for here is a new crusade against the poet which bids fair to swamp him in the mire of nothingness. Doctor Johnson, Dyce and Malone set a bad example when they began to point out textual corruptions, for, ever since, every literary and dramatic goose who knew more than his mother, has had some "emendation" to offer, and the result is limitless editions of Shakespeare's works, and no two of them alike in text. We go in for making any more "emendations" a penal offense.

Some old errors do occur in society by gentlemen failing to recognize ladies to whom they have been introduced, or with whom they have a slight acquaintance. The multifarious costumes of the women, nowadays, are so confounding that gentlemen who are not very sharp-sighted are constantly passing by ladies as strangers, supposing them really to be such, when the fact is it is a friend or acquaintance in a new rig. To see a woman at an evening reception and to be delighted with

her there, is no surety that you can recognize her on the street. Nine chances to one you will fail to howl as you pass her, and the result is you are charged with discourtesy or with having publicly "cut" her. Almost every day we hear of gentlemen "in Coventry" for these supposed slights. Moral: bow to every woman you meet on the street and run the risk of a sharp lecture at home for recognizing women you have no business to know. Of two evils choose the least!

Don't Abuse the Eyes.—Physicians tell us that multitudes of men and women have made their eyes weak for life by the too free use of the eyesight, reading small print and doing fine sewing. In view of these things, it is well to observe the following rules in the use of the eyes.

Avoid all sudden changes between light and darkness.
Never read by twilight or on a very cloudy day.

Never sleep so that on waking the eyes shall open on the light of the window.

Do not use eyesight by light so scant that it requires an effort to discriminate.

Never read or sew directly in front of the light of the window or door.

It is best to have the light fall from above, obliquely over the left shoulder.

Too much light creates a glare and pain and confuses the sight. The moment you are sensible of an effort to distinguish, that moment stop and talk, walk or ride.

As the sky is blue and the earth green it would seem that the ceiling should be a bluish tinge, and the carpet green and the walls of some mellow tint.

The moment you are instinctively prompted to rub the eyes, that moment cease using them.

If the eyelids are glued together on waking, do not forcibly open them, but apply the saliva with the finger, and then wash your eyes and face with warm water.

We are amazed daily at the number of "near-sighted" persons we meet. It would seem as if some member of every family had defective vision, while it is now understood by physicians that the sight of middle-aged people is impaired at a time when the vision should be perfect. Numbers of people are compelled to wear glasses at the age of thirty-five, whose eyes, up to that age, had been excellent. All this of course has a leading cause, and we believe that to be the reading at night of too fine print. Fine type and blurred print should at all times be avoided as the deadly enemy of the eye lenses, and in choosing a book, magazine or paper to read, always reject that which will "try the eyes" in the reading. The sight is too precious to be trifled with; therefore, be wise in time!

TAKE COURAGE.

It would be a pleasant thing, I sometimes think, if it were in my power to tap some discontented individual on the shoulder, and tell that person to bear along cheerfully and not give way to despair so quickly. It's hard, I know, to put this precept into practice, but it is right that we should do it, even if it does cost us a little trouble.

I know a person, who assured me that he never could succeed, he was so beset with disappointments. Now, I just set him down as being very foolish and inconsistent. He had a robust constitution, a strong arm and a clear brain, and a man is not very long idle in this country if he possesses those inestimable gifts. He lacked "go-ahead-iveness," if the editor will allow me to use that word, and he got discouraged at one disappointment.

Disappointments, indeed! Don't we all have them? The personage who is free from them should feel he is one of Heaven's most favored mortals. Why, when I went to school I thought I had one of the most crushing disappointments a poor girl ever was afflicted with. You needn't smile to yourself, and say you guess it was because I couldn't get the right lead to see me home from spelling-school, for it was *no such a thing*.

It was all about a composition. I had depicted in glowing colors—and to make the tale more impressive, had used red ink—the career of the lad who stole a pin and who ended his life on the gallows for the murder of his wife. Instead of the school giving way to hysterical sob, I was mortified to notice the vain efforts of the scholars endeavoring to restrain their laughter.

But the teacher—bless her dear soul!—said I could do better, and patted me on the shoulder. That pat did me good and encouraged me to persevere.

Before the end of that term I wrote a composition which, if it wasn't a brilliant effort, was, at least, not laughed at.

And that's what I want to do, and want others to do. This patting on the shoulder does more good than you think for. When we do a right thing, we want praise for it. It is only natural that we should expect it.

But how few of us get it! I do think, if the editors knew how we value their kindly appreciation, they'd slip in a few words occasionally in their notes to correspondents! But, bless me, I have no cause to complain on that head personally, for—well, no matter, you understand my meaning.

Now, young men, what's the use of your looking so woe-begone, when the girl of your heart says "No," when you think she should have said "Yes"? You couldn't be happy with her if she didn't love you, and why should you wish her to wed you if she didn't want to?

You think it hard of her, no doubt, but you'd find an unloving wife a much harder trial to endure. Bear your disappointment manfully; seek out some fair one who really *does* love you. I've heard of a number of persons who said they were "dying for love," but I have never heard of one who had that disease bad enough to kill them.

But if you're going to take every little disappointment to heart, and pine away, and talk of tombstones, and weeping willows, and broken hearts, you don't deserve a pat on the shoulder. No, you don't. But you deserve what you ought to have—a great *slap* on the back. That's my idea of the subject.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

My Voyage over the Atlantic.

We let the wharf go at two o'clock exactly, by the compass, and our sailing-ship steamed away from the city of New York as easily as if she was running on wheels; in fact the captain, at my suggestion, had grased the hull of the vessel so she would slide through the water with the utmost slickery smoothness and smooth sickness. The sails were set as well as the captain's

watch and the mouse-trap, and the city began to recede in the distance. Long I watched the waving of handkerchiefs of my friends, and the shaking of fists by my foes; both seemed to be disappointed and sighed over my departure. Many waved long strips of paper, which looked like bills, but I was bounding over the billows and didn't let the bill-owes on shore trouble me.

The captain ordered more wood put in the kitchen stove and a glass of brandy, and we increased our speed several Gordian knots a mile.

When we were out of sight of land I got terribly frightened, but the captain said there was land a mile or two down under us, and I felt better.

I told him I had always understood the Atlantic had two shores.

He said it had.

I told him I thought not, for I couldn't see the other one.

He said the world was round; but, he couldn't fool me; he might tell that to the marines and the merinos, but a well-balanced mind could never swallow that story unless it was well chewed up.

On the fifth day a terrible storm came up when we were about the center of the ocean. It was a six-story, three-masted storm, and the waves got loose and rolled mountains high, so that the sailors were obliged to cut tunnels through them for the passage of the ship.

I begged the captain to take in the masts, but he only took in some grog, and shouted "avast there," and the sailors avasted; then came the order to throw out more ballast, "shift tobacco quids to the left cheek," "mind your eye," and "don't tramp on my corns." The ship then heeled and tood over the billows like a country fellow at a husking dance, and finally stood on her bow-sprit while all hands went forward without any orders or very much chance for politeness.

The jar shattered the constitution of a piece of glassware which I used to carry a cork in and kept stowed in my trunk. This accident put me quite out of spirits.

The captain reefed a glass of grog, took in the ship's staff, kicked the cook, wound up the vessel, and the ship immediately righted and then left, her course being south-northerly with a slight inclination towards the east-wardly; somewhere in latitude 98 degrees Fahrenheit, with nothing but the point of the top-mast out of water for half the time, and the rudder fluttering in the breeze. More ballast was thrown out; and the vessel rising, skipped from one wave to another like a skipper, with the hurricane blowing heavily on the fore-quarter, the lee-sippers and the rear-bow fixtures, ground glass and porcelain shades, reflectors, etc., there is now coming into general use a *gas sunlight apparatus*, which bids fair to supersede all other means of distributing the rays of gaslight equally, while increasing their illuminating power. It is a very simple contrivance, consisting of a hemispherical cup or bowl of fine flint glass, supported by means of a light frame, easily attached to any ordinary gas-burner.

The refracting power of the water greatly increases the light by concentrating the rays directly under the bowl, while the upper part of the room, and, indeed, all parts, except a circular spot, several feet in diameter, under the bowl, are shaded to a degree that is as grateful to the eyes as the first hour of twilight. While the light is increased the heat is greatly diminished, making it invaluable as a summer reading and illuminating agent.

For the sick room this apparatus is equally valuable. The concentrating cup can be filled with water of any color, thus giving the patient a soft light of any shade desired. In the use of the clear, uncolored water, the obnoxious yellow-colored rays, which are so detrimental to the sight, are completely absorbed, making it the most desirable of all lights for sewing, reading and writing purposes, and, indeed, for all who have work to do requiring a soft, cool and pleasant light, that will not injure the eyes.

The cost of the whole apparatus is a mere trifle compared with its value. A plain flint-glass cup, with fixtures and horizontal burner, complete for use, costs two dollars. A cut-glass cup is priced two dollars and fifty cents, and when ordered with monograms, crests, coats of arms, or fanciful devices, from five to ten dollars.

It is to be regretted that this apparatus can only be applied to gas-burners, as it requires a horizontal flame forced out in a jet over the cup of water. But if the petroleum gasometer can be introduced at a reasonable cost into country homes, the gas sunlight can, of course, follow it, and the tall candle-stick and odorous kerosene lamp be banished forever.

EMILY VERNERY.

Woman's World.

The Ideal Home—Light—Candles, Kerosene, and Gas—Petroleum Gasometers for Country Houses—The Gas Sunlight.

The ideal home, like the ideal wife, husband or child, is never realized. But who that possesses the actual home, wife, husband or child, would for that imperfection which marks every thing finite or human give them up? and who is there that, not possessing them, would hesitate between the imperfect actual possession, if attainable, and the life of longing for the unattainable ideal which could not possibly be realized? Those only are winners in the life-race for happiness who learn the lesson of being content with a far smaller degree of bliss than they deemed possible in the morning of life, ere the rose-leaves of love and hope had faded from their sky. The loveliest homes I have ever seen were invariably those whose household treasures had been gradually accumulated, and where the *art of living* had been perfected by long years of experience. It is in little seeming nothings that the grand sum total of domestic comfort and happiness is made up.

We are rather ashamed to acknowledge it, but, after all, small comforts are of more value to us in this work-a-day world than great joys.

Among those small comforts which contribute to our home joys there is none of greater moment to us than "Light." But, you say, light is a common possession. Yes, so it is, but there is a vast difference in the lights of different houses. It is not only of no small moment to the dwellers in a household, that the rooms should be well lighted by day, but also that those most precious hours of the twenty-four, the interval between twilight and bed-time, should be rendered cheerful by lights which at once are clear, bright and penetrating, yet softened so that there is no glare.

Of course in the homes of the very poor this luxury can not be commanded. There the adamant candle and kerosene lamp must still do duty; but even these can be

so managed as to measurably counteract their inconveniences. When the greater evil of the two is used, it should be remembered that tall candlesticks are preferable to short ones, as the light falls more directly on the objects in the room, and at the same time more obliquely on the eye. Three candles in a tall French candlestick afford a better light to read or write by than the same number placed in short candlesticks and arranged with spaces of several feet between them on the table. Yet we must be careful not to have the lights too high. Nothing is more tantalizing and torturing to the eye than to have a blaze of light above one's head, while the objects which we wish to have illuminated are shrouded in a misty gloom of half twilight.

Kerosene, when burned in a good and well-kept lamp, affords the best substitute for gas; but even the greatest care and cleanliness can not entirely dispel the disagreeable odor which it burns. A kerosene lamp should always have a shade, in addition to the chimney of clear glass around the burner or wick. A plain ground-glass shade is preferable to one of glass or cut glass. For a student's or sewing lamp I would by all means recommend a porcelain shade, or, where this can not be commanded, one of paper. Green or blue are the best colors for the outside of this shade, while the inner surface should always be white.

There is among late inventions one which, if it prove entirely satisfactory and practical, will probably be brought into immediate use and made available for private gasometers in country homes, and factories, and dwellings beyond the reach of gas companies' mains, and wherever the prime cost of coal and freights will not render it impracticable. It consists of the generation of petroleum gas, which has long been a subject of inquiry and experiment, but without any satisfactory results until lately. A process is now in operation in New York city, in which crude petroleum is roasted in a retort, while the gas generated is collected in a gasometer, and thence distributed by pipes to jets and burners. The process is simple, easy to work, and almost identical with the manufacture of coal gas. The gas is of good quality, burns whiter than coal gas, and is said also to cost considerably less. It is also asserted that the new product is easily susceptible of increased illuminating power. Whether it is adapted to manufacture on a great scale remains to be tested.

Wherever gas is used, light can be distributed and used to better effect than with any other means of illumination. In addition to the artistic beauty to be had in gas fixtures, ground glass and porcelain shades, reflectors, etc., there is now coming into general use a *gas sunlight apparatus*, which bids fair to supersede all other means of distributing the rays of gaslight equally, while increasing their illuminating power. It is a very simple contrivance, consisting of a hemispherical cup or bowl of fine flint glass, supported by means of a light frame, easily attached to any ordinary gas-burner.

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EMILY VERNERY.

ANOTHER STAR STORY!

Among the literary good things which the SATURDAY JOURNAL will soon lay before its readers, is a

NEW STORY BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "DEATH-NOTCH," "HAWKEYE HARRY," "BOY SPY," ETC., ETC.

No living writer better knows the great West, its peculiar characters, its intensely exciting early local history, and its broad spirited life, than this contributor. His "Death-Notch" and other stories attest this; and in securing him to cater exclusively for our readers, we have been guided by the purpose which is the animating spirit of the paper—to call around us the

Best of the Rising Talent of the Country!

and from among whom our writers of the Future are to come. Look at the list of those whom we have brought forward, and who are justly famous, and the public can see what a work we are doing for the literature of this country. Mr. Coomes' new romance is,

OLD SOLITARY.

The Hermit Trapper;

OR,

THE DRAGON OF SILVER LAKE.

It is in the young author's best vein, with scenes that are strikingly novel and new, and characters that are decided originals. The advancing tide of settlement and civilization was, itself, preceded by a remarkable race of strong spirits and odd specimens of human nature. These Old Comes here throws into the full light in a narrative of the most absorbing interest and attractiveness.

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders. Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—London, which is superior, are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use the Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, bearing of each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies want of merit. Many MSS. unsuitable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find an ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We will try and find place for "Delivered from Evil;" "All for Gold;" "The Convent's Scheme;" "Death at the Gate;" "David Herrick's Ruse;" "An Affair of Honor;" "The Mad Puritans;" "Peruvian Maiden's Song;" "The Enamel Locket;" "Need of Reform;" "Chaff;" "Poor amid Plenty;" "A Fish Story;" "Hundred Mile Race;" "Hamilton's Ferry Affair;" "Louise Murray's Little Game;" "A Fisherman's Catch;" "Good Boys;" "My Aunt's Wife;" "Let It Alone."

The following we shall have no room for, unless, to pronounce unavailable. "Kitty Glover's Story;" "Lottie Long's Diary;" "Hope;" "To a School-girl;" "Brighter than the Day;" "The First Quarrel after Marriage;" "Have You Seen my Darling Girl?" "Who was the Traitor?" "The Sioux Trader's Protege;" "Who was the Heir?" "Notwithstanding;" "The Year of the Revolution;" "The Hired Girl's Plot;" "Moon at Midnight;" "Nelly Blake's Spite."

J. F. C. "Phantom Princess" ran through 18 numbers—78 cents.

P. J. S. Nos. 2 and 35 are not now in print. The rest up to 37 are in print.

M. C. B. Cincinnati. What assurance have we that the poem rendered by you is original? Have we not seen it before?

Carr. Boston. The papers are mailed regularly, every Saturday. If yours fail to arrive, blow up "Uncle Sam." We are very particular with our mail list, so that an error is almost impossible. When assured that a certain issue is lost in the mails we cheerfully duplicate it.

J. F. C. Dress according to your means, never beyond it. A party dress means a full dress, or not as you see proper. For a party dress, a "tail," black vest, and light-colored pants. Next year it will be something else. A frock coat always is rented.—Never try to abbreviate an abbreviation. Messrs. is an abbreviation.

Mrs. H. M. T. We have already announced the decision on your MSS. If you do not read the editorial announcements we can not be responsible for your want of information. As to writing to authors, to inform them of the disposition made of their contributions, we can not do it. It is wholly unnecessary.

The poems and story by Mrs. E. E. A. are good enough to have been better. They are good in spirit but somewhat crude in expression, hence we had to place them on the list of unavailable. We can not act as reviser and censor. That is the school-master's business, you know.

We must have assurance that the poems by D. E. K. are original. Do not doubt, but that an editor's business. Will publish with pleasure if original.

H. S. R. The person named is a man, as the name ought to have told you.—The best novel company for you is doubtless the nearest at hand.—The Dime Publications' Trade Rates are 65 cents for novels, songs 5 cents. If sent by mail, add 10 cents on each to prepay postage. By express at your own charge.

DEVERAUX. Your duty is just as plain as your nose on your face. Be an honest man and wed the lady at once.

Mrs. E. E. A. You remit 6 cents for MSS. return. Your last package contains marked 19 cents due, which please remit, and 6 cents more for MSS. return.

Mrs. E. C. Z. We know not your especial ailment, but can say that sleeping on the right side in addition to permitting a free action of the heart, has the greatest advantage of favoring the escape through the pyloric orifice in the stomach, of that organ's contents by gravitation, the stomach then lying in an inclined position from left to right, which it also assumes when one is in the erect attitude. For people who limit themselves to light or easily-digested suppers, or who, when at rest, assume a posture of rest may be a matter of indifference; but to individuals inclined to rotundity, or to indulgence in hot suppers, and accommodations, the best way to avoid, or to facilitate escape from uneasy sensations, is a question of interest.

GEOGRAPHY. By the new census St. Louis is the fourth city in size in the Union; Chicago is fifth; Baltimore sixth; Boston seventh; Cincinnati eighth; New Orleans ninth, and San Francisco tenth. New York city is nominally credited with having 942,292 inhabitants, 207,100 more than any other city, or permanent residents; but at least half as many more are in the city daily, doing business, yet live elsewhere. The whole of New York city, including around the great city is peopled with what the original inhabitants call "New-Yorkers." Brooklyn having 400,000 inhabitants, is, virtually, a suburb of New York, and beyond doubt will become a part of the metropolis in a few years' time.

ISABELLA F. S. To written ivory-handled knives rub them with a soft cloth and damp table salt—no common salt.

H. M. Rochester. The present population of the world is estimated to be as follows: Europe, 280 millions; Asia, 800 millions; Africa, 150 millions; North America, 80 millions; South America, 30 millions; Australia, 2 millions; Polynesia, 15 millions, giving a grand total of 1,315,000,000 inhabitants on the face of the earth. The world is not so thickly peopled; and yet, when we consider its vast areas of habitable country, now uncultivated, or but meagerly peopled, we have some faint conception of the capacity of the globe for human progress and expansion.

CHARLES FORD. The little finger of the left hand is the only finger on which a gentleman should wear a ring, and then the ring should be a seal, or of some plain stone, for only the "flash" class of men sport gorgeous diamond rings.

Mrs. PARSON. To pack eggs for winter use, put them either in a stone or earthen vessel, sprinkling the bottom with coarse salt, then one layer of eggs, being particular to put the small end down; another layer of salt, and so on, until the keg is full, being sure to have salt on top.

ADELAIDE SCOTT. We would not advise you to promenade Broadway of an afternoon to meet your admirer, for it not only endangers your reputation and common, but he will lose all respect for you.

ERNEST H. You can always ascertain what year in time to come will be leap-year, as it will divide by four without a remainder, except the last year of the century, which is a leap-year only when divided by four hundred without a remainder. Thus the year 1,900 will not be a leap-year.

HOUSEWIFE. All kinds of soap at any season of the year will keep without deterioration. It is stated that, among the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, soap was found in a state of preservation after having been buried over seventeen hundred years!

COUNTRY MILLINER. It is a mistaken idea that bonnets are old-fashioned for young girls fifteen and sixteen. On the contrary, they are present style, and trimmed with bright ribbons are youthful and becoming.

FLORA McFLINNEY. If your brown silk waist is worn out, and the rest of your dress is in a good condition, nothing would do so well as to have a complete new a tight-fitting basque of brown velvet, trimmed with brown silk or knit-plaiting, varying the trimming on your skirt by bands of brown velvet.

GREAT WESTERN. The dome of the Capitol at Washington is twenty-three feet higher than Trinity church-steeple, New York.

ROBERT H. We can not say why it is that all great men have but one wife. It is a fact. To say nothing of the great names of antiquity and modern times in the old world, we have all our Presidents down to our President K. Folk; most of the leading men of the Revolution; most of the Judges of the Supreme Court; most of our eminent statesmen and lawyers; a good majority of our members of Congress; most of the eminent modern writers, etc., etc.

Z. WATSON. There are but nine cities in the world numbering over one million inhabitants. Three of these are in China, viz.:—Soochow, 2,400,000; Peking, 1,600,000; and Canton, 1,200,000. Two are in Japan, viz.:—Yeddo, 1,554,000, and Osaka, 1,000,000. One is in England, viz.:—London, 2,000,000, by far the largest city in the world. One is in France, viz.:—Paris, 1,825,000. Constantinople, in Turkey, has 1,070,000 inhabitants, and Calcutta, in India, has 1,000,000. Had the last census in New York been fairly taken we believe that this city would have numbered a million permanent inhabitants, while over two hundred thousand daily walk its streets who live in the adjoining towns and country

FAITH IN LOVE.

"My love and I sailed over the sea."

BY JAMES HUNGERFORD.

My love and I sailed over the sea,
And in clouds and storm came down the night,
And the wind blew fiercely and fearfully,
And the waters raged with relentless might.
But my love and I were not afraid,
For the night and the wind and the angry sea,
For faith and love our refuge made—
I trusted in Heaven, she trusted in me.

In my arms she lay with her heart at rest,
Mid the roaring wind and the dashing brine,
Like a gentle dove in its peaceful nest,
With her sweet eyes steadily fixed on mine.
And whenever wildly the billows broke,
While the loud wind howled o'er the terrible sea,
With love and peace in our hearts we spoke:
"I trust in Heaven!" "I trust in thee!"

When the morning came, the waves went down,
And the wind blew softly over the sea;
But love and faith all terror drown,
And the tempest is safe as the calm can be.
We were blest alike in the storm and calm,
And our peace was beyond the power of speech;
For the ill of life and the sea, our balm:
Both trusted in Heaven, each trusted in each.

In trouble, in happiness, God is just,
Though the world is changeable as the sea;
And the hearts that love, and therefore trust,
Are peaceful and blest wherever they be.
Love has no creed of happiness,
As boundless, faithfulness as the sea,
Which lips and eyes and hearts express:
"When I trust in Heaven, I trust in thee."

Toying with a Man's Heart.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

In the bay window they were sitting,
Gracie's gold-brown hair and Eva's raven-
dark tresses intermingling as the two grace-
ful heads were bent so closely together;
and every moment or so there came a burst
of laughter from either Gracie De Lorme or
her pretty, winsome friend, Eva Raymond,
whom Gracie's dignified, faithful brother,
Gus, had been expected to fall in love with,
and hadn't.

"It's shameful, positively shameful, child,
after all the praises I've said and sung be-
fore you came, not to mention your own
sweet charms now you are here. I didn't
think our Gus *could* be such a fool—and it's
all that Mollie Rymple's doings."

Miss Gracie uttered the name as though
both name and person were excessively dis-
tasteful to her; and then she curled her
short upper lip superbly.

Eva Raymond laughed and blushed. She
could hardly help doing either, because
Gracie was really ludicrous, and then, her
own sweet face was so tenderly fair that
the dainty rosette tints flushed on her round
cheeks at pleasure.

It was little wonder that Miss Gracie was
provoked at her incorrigible brother, in that
he had not fallen head over ears in love with
charming Miss Raymond at first sight;
indeed, we ourselves wonder what could
have ailed the man, in that such roguish
dimples, such arch, sweet black eyes, such
glory of coal-black tresses, such Hebe
perfection of stature, as this selfsame Eva
Raymond possessed, did not conquer him
at once.

But, as Gracie had said—it was all Mollie
Rymple's doings.

Mollie Rymple, a tall, queenly girl, with
eyes the color of a purple pansy, and velvet
white skin dashed with a tint of ruby-pink
wine; with slender, snowy hands, a white
arched neck, and a mouth so icily cold in
its pride.

A very fashionable young lady, who al-
ways dressed in the latest style, from the
wing in her hat to the No. 2's walking bal-
morals on her high-arched foot.

And Gus De Lorme liked style; and Gus
De Lorme liked Miss Rymple considerably
better than he ever admitted to any one but
sister Gracie; and to sister Gracie he had
confided his secret.

The secret was a twofold one; the double
part of it was, that Miss Rymple would not
accept Gus' offer, nor yet would she permit
him to depart in peace; in plainer words,
as Gracie tersely put it—"Mollie Rymple
was trying to make a fool of Gus, and he
was fool enough to let her."

It was just at this juncture that Eva
Raymond came on her long-promised, often-
delayed visit to Gracie; and Gus wouldn't
swear off from Mollie Rymple and pin his
allegiance to pretty, graceful Eva.

And that was what the two girls were
laughing and chatting over in the bay win-
dow, that cold, sunshiny day.

"I can't appreciate you at all, Gracie.
Really, I've no objection to your brother's
preferring Miss Rymple to me."

Eva laughed saucily.
"Of course you haven't," returned Gracie,
loftily; "but, it's a matter of serious im-
portance to me. I tell you, Eva, I *won't*
have her for a sister—and, by hook or crook,
I *will* have you."

I think if Gus De Lorme had heard and
seen his sister then, he would have trem-
bled in his boots. As it was, dainty Eva
smiled indulgently.

"Silly girl! Shall I rearrange the old
legend, *L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose*,
for your benefit? I think I would word it,
'Gracie proposes, Gus does not propose, and,
after all, Eva shall dispose of them all.'"

Handsomeness Gus De Lorme was looking
disconsolately at the fire as Gracie went
briskly in the room, and tapped him on the
shoulder.

"Thinking of Mollie Rymple, I'll war-
rant! When ever, under the sun, Gus De
Lorme, are you going to give her up? You
see she won't have you."

He flushed a little at her candid, sarcastic
words, and then raised his eyes—Gracie
never dreamed, when she wondered so honest-
ly how any girl could withstand his eyes,
how very like her own they were.

"Gracie, it is impossible for me to forget
Mollie. If she doesn't care for me, it does
not alter my feeling for her."

"Then you really do love her, eh?"
And Gracie's eyes twinkled and snapped
as she very quietly asked the question.

Gus smiled in the supreme consciousness
of his love for her.
"Very well, then," Gracie went on; "if
you are so bent and determined to win Miss
Rymple, and all your plans have heretofore
been unavailable to accomplish the result,
suppose I give you a hint on the subject?"

"You—a hint? You mean you can help
me win Mollie?"

He almost laughed in her cool, unexcited
face that well covered her exuberant spirits.
"Precisely, *mon cher frere*. In all confi-
dence I tell you, that you have not set about
your love affairs as we women folks like.
The truth is, Gus, you're altogether too de-
voted; altogether too much in love, and
Miss Rymple, sure of you at last, is going
to look and unlook her willing fish at her

convenience. Gus! there, don't be so an-
gry; I don't mean—"

For Gus had risen from his chair, very
white around his lips, and trembling slight-
ly, and Gracie knew he was very angry.

"You should select your language,
Gracie! Miss Rymple would blush at it."
To hear it, but not to do it," said she,
bluntly.

"But, upon my word of honor,
Gus, if you would only get up a desperate
flirtation with somebody else—a sort of
counter-irritant, you know, and let her see—"

But some one called Gracie, and the
remark was left unfinished.

"I do wonder," thought proud, love-lorn
Gus, as he promenaded to and fro, "what
Mollie would say? Gracie's suggestion was
not ill-timed, and to win Mollie I'd flirt
with—well, Eva Raymond, for instance,
since she's so eligible."

An hour later, Gus De Lorme walked
bravely into the west sitting-room, where
he heard Eva's merry, girlish voice.

"Here goes," he said, to himself, "for
the counter-irritant!"

And the next minute, as he bowed before
Eva, he caught himself remarking in-
wardly, "what a perfect voice she possessed; strange
he hadn't observed it before!"

"So that is what it all means, is it? Well,
I wonder if Mr. Augustus De Lorme re-
members that two can play at the same
game?"

Miss Rymple was adjusting the Pompa-
dour roll under the short crepe masses of
spun-gold hair, but she paused a moment to
turn toward Miss Bertie Remsen, who sat
rapidly sewing at a rear window.

She was a trim, tidy, tonguey little
woman, this Miss Bertie Remsen, the village
dressmaker, who had that morning come to
Mollie Rymple direct from the De Lormes'.

"I am sure I couldn't say what Mr. De
Lorme thinks, Miss Rymple, but I *am* sure
I heard just what I've told you—in all con-
fidence, you know, Miss Gracie and he had
the talk in the library, and I was sewing in
the little room next."

Mollie went deliberately on arranging her
hair, and not paying very much attention to
Miss Remsen's gossip.

"A 'counter-irritant,' eh?" and she
smiled as she repeated the word. "I wonder
who Gracie will administer as the first
prescription? I wonder if Dr. Sedgwick
and I can't play off against them?"

And, sure enough, society at Vandania
was smitten speechless at the curious
"change of base," and, upon recovering its
tongue, began to conjecture if Gus De
Lorme really had flirted Mollie Rymple?

And, all alone in her room, Mollie
sometimes cry a little because Eva Ray-
mond was so very pretty, and, and, and, and
she over and over that she had so cruelly
used the only man she ever had cared for,
or ever would. As for Bob Sedgwick, if he
did have an "M. D." to his name, she
almost despised him.

"Gus!—Mr. De Lorme, I mean! *indeed*
you must not talk in that way. What would
Gracie say—or Miss Rymple?"

Eva Raymond glanced slyly up at Gus De
Lorme's flushed, earnest face that was lean-
ing altogether too near her own—that is, for
mere conversational purposes.

"What do you suppose I care for Gracie
—or Miss Rymple, either? And he looked
boldly into her piquant, half-averted face.

"Dear me!" and her eyes looked so inno-
cent—"don't you *really* care? Why, I
thought part of my duty as teacher to you
was to—"

"Make me utterly forget Mollie Rymple!"
he interrupted. "Eva, dear little Eva, I
have learned to *so* love you. Am I worth
having?"

"Oh, Gus!"

And so the "counter-irritant" worked;
and Eva wore a betrothal-ring on her finger
when Miss Bertie Remsen came to finish up
a few odds and ends a month later.

I thought I must run in a minute and
tell you the news," she said to Mollie Rym-
ple the evening of the day she had been at
the De Lormes. "Isn't it just like a story
you read in the paper? who ever 'd' a'
thought Gus De Lorme and Eva Raymond
would have made a match of it?"

And Mollie—poor, poor Mollie Rymple!
listened in cold agony to the truth that
cut home so closely—to the truth that
made every nerve quiver with exquisite
pain, when she knew of a certainty, that
she had trifled too long with her lover's
heart.

A pain it was, too, that will come, and
ought to come, to the heart of every woman
who dare play with so costly, so precious a
treasure, as the honest love of an honest man.

A Strange Girl:
A NEW ENGLAND LOVE STORY.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.
AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND
KIT," "RED MAZEPPA," "ACE AND SPURS,"
"HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF
NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

BRICK "RISES" TO EXPLAIN.

"Now don't look at me in that way with
your great eyes almost popping out of your
head; I am speaking soberly and in down-
right earnest. Fortune is before you, if
you will only choose to grasp it," Brick
said, just a little uneasy under the piercing
glance of Lydia.

The girl made no reply.
Daisy looked at her for a moment as if
uncertain how to act.

"By the way," he said, abruptly, "I told
you that I had gone into business. Are
you not curious about the matter?"

"I do not believe you," the girl said,
frankly.

"By Jove! how extremely unpleasant
you are in your remarks this evening!
You must be out of temper at something."

"I have seen you," the girl replied.
Daisy winced again and shut his teeth
together tightly for a moment.

"You are in a terrible mood to-night,"
he said, endeavoring to conceal his annoy-
ance. "Well now, for once in your life
you wrong me. It is really the truth that I
am deeply engaged in commercial affairs.
I told you at our last interview that I pre-
ferred to receive money from the great
world rather than from you; you must
own that there is just a touch of honor
about me, bad as I am. With the money I
received from you I proceeded to lay the
snare to catch the human birds known
commonly as gulls. You may remember
that I always said that a man of wits could
live well by simply trading upon the weak-

nesses of his fellow-men. To illustrate: a
man of brains discovers some important
secret that the men without brains pay him
well to disclose to them. That is the idea
at the bottom of all patents, you know."

The girl looked at him with a counte-
nance whereon unbelief was strongly im-
pressed.

"In fact, I suppose I could claim to be
an inventor," he said.

"And what have you invented?" she
asked, incredulously.

"Listen," and Daisy drew a folded paper
from his pocket-book, and opening it, read
aloud:

"IMPORTANT TO FARMERS AND OTHERS.—
How to keep wells from freezing in the coldest
weather. Full particulars sent by mail for 50
cents. Address Benjamin Franklin, Saco,
Maine."

Then Daisy looked at Lydia and smiled.
"You see what an important discovery I
have made. Where's the man who would
not freely give fifty cents to keep his well
from freezing up?"

"And do you really know a way to pre-
vent it?" the girl asked, doubtfully.

"Certainly. When I receive the fifty
cents, I send back the directions; they are
very short and quite plain. When the
weather threatens to be cold, take in your
well and place it by the kitchen fire."

"But that is impossible!" the girl ex-
claimed.

"Ah, I don't agree to keep the wells
from freezing; only tell them how," Brick
said, unblushingly.

"A trick, and like you," the girl said,
quietly.

"Yes, I flatter myself that it isn't every
one who has the brains to get up so neat a
dodge," Brick said, complacently. "Now,
here's Number Two." And he unfolded
another paper.

"How not to lose at cards, dice, or any
other game of chance; worth a thousand dol-
lars to any young man. Send twenty-five cents
by mail to James Gray, Biddeford, Maine."

"Now this is really no humbug; this is
truth," Brick exclaimed.

"And the answer?"

"Never play at any game of chance,"
and Daisy caressed his chin, smilingly.

Lydia's face plainly showed the contempt
she felt.

"I calculate—as a down-easter would
say—that these two little advertisements
will bring me in about ten dollars a week
clear profit. It's very handy, these two
towns being situated so near together. It
gives me two post-offices, and it will be
some time before the folks will suspect my
little game. Then, when these simple and
yet ingenious devices are worn threadbare,
I'll have half a dozen others just as taking.

Lydia, my dear, until you have gone into
this sort of business you never will have
any idea what a large amount of idiots
there are walking around in this world,
pretending to be perfectly sane."

"The police may interfere with your oc-
cupation."

Very little danger of that. The men
who get sold on such things generally have
sense enough to keep their folly to them-
selves. They only lose a trifle; besides, I
don't operate anywhere near the post-office
address. The advertisements go to news-
papers located in far-off States, and the
gulls seldom make any fuss about the sell.
It's a light, genteel business, and one that
suits me to a hair," Brick said, in his easy,
airy way.

The look of contempt which appeared on
the face of the girl clearly expressed her
opinion of Daisy Brick's clever devices.

"And now, to return to the subject
about which I came especially to speak.
Do you want to be wealthy—to be forever
above want and care?"

"Not through any means which you can
offer," Lydia replied, firmly.

"Oh, nonsense!" Brick cried, impatient-
ly; "what matters the means as long as
the end is attained? But I will rise to ex-
plain. This Sinclair Paxton is madly in
love with you."

Lydia rose suddenly to her feet and look-
ed down upon Brick with a face as white
and as colorless as a marble statue.

"Now don't be a fool!" he exclaimed—
he saw danger written plainly on the girl's
face—"and listen to what I have got to
say. This Paxton is rich—or at least his
father is, and Sinclair is his heir. He will
marry you if you play your cards rightly,
and I can advise you in regard to that."

"Why do you wish me to marry him?"
the girl asked, slowly, and with a face like
marble.

"Well—I would like to see you settled
comfortably in the world, and—"

"And because you would play the
leech's part; by the hold that you have on
me you would wring money from him. You
would make me steal my husband's
money to buy your silence!" the girl cried,
indignantly.

"Hush! not so loud!" exclaimed Brick,
in alarm.

"Oh, do not fear; we are all alone in
the house, though I should care very little
if all the world heard my words," Lydia
said, bitterly.

"My dear, don't run away with these
foolish ideas," Brick said, soothingly. "I
am only acting for your good. Confound
it, do you think that I haven't got any
blood in my veins? Do you suppose that
it isn't a sacrifice for me to give you up
to this man? Of course I intend to be
paid for it. Not that I'm going to act like
a leech, though, as you suggest. I want a
certain sum of money, and then I'll go
away, and you'll never see me again. I'll
give you any assurance in the world that
you can suggest; I don't care what it is.
I am really acting honest in this matter.
I have thought it over carefully. It was
quite a struggle before I could bring my-
self to consent to leave you forever.
Come, I should think that you would
jump at the chance to marry the man you
love."

"How do you know that I love him?"
Lydia demanded.

"Well, I judge so from what I have
heard and seen. I saw you when you were
walking with him the other night. Now
don't be foolish; such another chance as
this may never come to you in all your
life. Never mind the past; don't think of
that at all. You and I are the only ones
that know it. I shall never speak if you
do as I say. Marry this Paxton, pay me a
thousand dollars within a year after your
marriage, and I'll engage never to trouble
you again."

"You would have me wed this man with-
out my lips?" the girl demanded, bit-
terly.

"You need not speak at all; I'll do all
the lying that is necessary in the affair,"

Brick said, coolly. "All you will have to
do is to keep quiet and look happy. Of
course the Paxton folks will want to know
something about your family. I'll attend
to that, and also to your past life. I shall
only have to tell the truth, suppressing
some few trifling particulars which really
are neither here nor there."

"Oh, what a base part you would have
me play!" the girl exclaimed.

"Not at all! What is your past life to
them, or to Sinclair, for that matter?
You'll make him a good wife, I know, and
that is all he wants," by marrying him I
should make myself, indeed, your slave."

"I would sooner die than become his
wife!" Lydia cried, almost fiercely. "I do
not love him, but I respect him too much
to deceive him, and from this time forth I
shall strive to do all in my power to cure
him of any affection that he may have for
me. He may think me fickle and weak-
minded, but base or false he never shall
find me. Now, you can do your worst;
you can speak out, and tell everybody who
and what I am; I care but little, but de-
ceive him I will *not*. I am bound fast
enough now to you, by marrying him I
should make myself, indeed, your slave."

"Lydia, I trust that you will change
your mind," Brick said, rising, and in not
the best humor in the world.

"Never, never!" cried the girl, decidedly.
"I'll see you again in three or four days;
think it over," and, with this parting in-
junction, Brick left the house.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STONE QUARRY.

BRICK walked out of the house into the
street. In reality he was inflamed with
rage, although he appeared quiet and calm.

"Of all fools in this world there's no fool
like a woman when she is a fool!" he mut-
tered, savagely, as he strode along at quite
a high rate of speed for him. "There's a
clean thousand dollars in this business, just
as easy as turning my hand over, if she
would only do as I want her to; but there's
the rub. In the temper she is in now I
might as well attempt to turn the Saco
river from its course by whistling at it as
to either persuade or force her to do as I
want her to. There never was a woman
yet who could comprehend the meaning of
the word, reason. It is an enigma to them.
They are solely and purely creatures of im-
pulse. There is no earthly use in trying to
reason with one of them. The more you
talk, the less they understand."

Brick by this time had come to the corner
of the street, and hesitated for a moment,
as if uncertain which way to direct his steps.
As he stood under the shadows of a large
elm he suddenly became conscious that a
man had followed him up the street and
was rapidly approaching him.

Brick gave no particular heed to this, but
the man came directly on and halted op-
posite to him instead of passing up the street.

Brick looked at the stranger, and the
stranger looked at him; and Brick, at the
first glance, set the stranger down as being
under the influence of liquor.

"You're the man I want to see," said the
stranger, hoarsely.

"Excuse me; I really believe that you
have the advantage of me," Brick said,
blandly.

"My name is Hollis—Jediel Hollis."

Brick instantly remembered the name.
He had not forgotten the conversation he
had had with the grocery clerk, Gardner, in
regard to the pretty mill-girl, Lydia, and
her suitors.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Hollis, the carpenter, I be-
lieve," Brick said, wondering what on
earth he wanted with him.

"You know Miss Gracie, don't you?"
Hollis asked.

"Yes, I have the pleasure of her ac-
quaintance."

"I've got something very particular to
say to you about her."

Brick looked at Hollis in amazement.
He couldn't understand what that some-
thing could be.

"If you have half an hour to spare, I'd like
to have a little conversation with you about
her."

"Well, in what particular way?" Brick,
with all his acuteness, was puzzled.

"I can't explain here," the carpenter
said, hurriedly; "besides we are liable to be
overheard; folks are passing by us con-
stantly."

"Is it something particular?"

"Yes, very particular."

"Very well; I'm at your service, then."

"I know a nice quiet place, where we
can talk without danger of being over-
heard," Hollis said; "it's a stone quarry,
just outside of town. The moon is coming
up, so that we will have plenty of light."

"Let's be going, then."

And they proceeded onward. Ten min-
utes' walk carried them out of the shaded
street into the rays of the rising moon.

"Have a cigar?" Hollis said, halting sud-
denly, and taking a couple from his pocket.

"Thank you, yes."

Then, for the first time, Brick got a good
view of Hollis' face. He saw that it was as
pale as death, and that there were great
dark circles around the bloodshot eyes; and
he noticed, as he offered the lighted match,
that Hollis' hand trembled like an aspen leaf.

"He'll have an attack of the jim-jams
soon," Brick muttered to himself.

Then the two proceeded onward without
further halt until the stone quarry was
reached.

"Let us go up and sit on the rocks; we'll
have the breeze up there," Hollis suggested.

Brick was nothing loth, and the two
climbed up the narrow path until they
reached the summit of the rocks, and there
they sat down.

Before them was the circular excavation
of the quarry; behind them the open coun-
try, rough and sterile, and patched here
and there with stunted trees, while bushes
stretched down toward the far-off ocean,
the beating of whose surf against the shore
could almost be heard from the quarry's
heights.

"Now we can talk without danger of
being overheard," Hollis said, and his first
act after sitting down was to fing his only
half-consumed cigar down into the depths
of the quarry.

Brick watched the action with astonish-
ment; for the first time the thought came
into his mind that possibly he had done a
foolish thing in trusting himself in such a
desolate place with a man evidently under
the influence of liquor, and who seemed to
be a little unsettled in the upper story.

"You know Lydia

clair. She is very much of a lady, and White says there isn't a girl in the mill who attends to her work better."

"I can fully confirm Mr. White's assurance in regard to that matter, from what I know of the pay-roll," Sinclair added.

"Well, Sinclair, has it really gone as far as this letter implies?" the father asked.

"No, sir," Sinclair responded, quickly. "I own I have paid the lady in question some attentions, and do think a great deal of her; but there is no engagement between us, and I don't know as I am really justified in calling it a love affair."

"The young lady told me as much. I had quite a pleasant chat with her."

"Then I suppose if the lady and I make up our minds that we do care for one another, we may hope the union will not be without your sanction?"

"From what I know of the lady I can see no reason to object. Both are old enough to know your own minds and to act for yourselves. I frankly confess, Sinclair, that I would have preferred to have had you marry the daughter of some of the old families about us; but, perhaps, it is as well, if not better, that a little fresh blood should be infused into the old New England strain. But do you know any thing about her family?"

"Very little, sir. I have never questioned her. In fact, father, the affair has not gone far enough yet for me to proceed to that length. I know that she is only a poor girl, but that makes very little difference in my estimation."

"None at all!" the deacon exclaimed, quickly. "A man marries a woman, not a money-bag. The cardinal point is to consider whether she is suited to you or not, and whether she will make you a good wife."

"Marriage is a lottery, you know, father."

"Yes, yes—terrible lot of blanks, my son, and very few prizes. As a general rule our family have not been lucky with their wives."

"So I have heard, father. I remember that aunt Jane used to hint mysteriously at some terrible curse hanging over our family, dating way back to the old Indian days."

"Yes, there is quite a legend. I suppose you ought to know it, as you are thinking about getting married. My father told it to me just before my marriage."

"Do you believe in it, father?" Sinclair asked, with a smile.

"My son, never doubt an old family legend, or you'll ruin the reputation of the house forever," the deacon said, laughing.

"Legends are sacred things, you know, to be handed down from father to son, like old family plate. I am sorry to say, though, that the story doesn't put one of our ancestors in the best possible light. But you shall judge for yourself. The legend commences just after the founding of the Saco colony. One of the first cabins put up here was built by our ancestor, Colonel Israel Paxton. Tradition says that it stood on precisely the same spot where this mansion now stands. The settlers lived in almost constant warfare with the Indians of the Saco tribe. Finally the great chief of the Wampanoags of Rhode Island, Metamora, or King Philip, as the whites termed him, formed a great Indian confederacy, intended to drive the whites into the ocean. Philip's defeat and death broke the power of the Indians forever. The Sacos, who formed part of the confederacy, suffered severely; only a small part of the tribe ever came back to the river, and they pitched their village some fifty miles up the stream, in what is now the town of Hiram. But, weak as the tribe was, it was still a source of considerable annoyance to the settlers at the mouth of the river."

"Our ancestor, the colonel, was one of the volunteers who had marched to Boston and helped to destroy the power of King Philip. After he returned to Saco, by some chance he became acquainted with an Indian girl—called after the fanciful fashion of the savages, Little Leaf. She was the daughter of Kennebunk, the great chief of the Saco tribe. The colonel, much to the astonishment of the colonists—for he was a straight-laced, God-fearing man—married the Indian girl. This marriage should have cemented a peace between the whites and the Indians, but, so far from doing so, some six months after the wedding, the Indian wife led a party of the colonists, headed by our ancestor, the colonel, to the retreat of the red-men, and nearly all of the tribe were butchered in the fight. The few who escaped found shelter with the far-off tribes to the north, and never more with arms in their hands menaced the Saco colony."

"Our ancestor, the colonel, received a large grant of land for his services; but the deed of treachery, by means of which nearly all of her kindred had fallen, weighed heavily on the soul of the Indian girl, and three months after the date of the slaughter she died in child-birth, invoking the most horrid curses upon the head of her husband and predicting that the curse of the wronged red-man would cling unto the family of the Paxtons until the blood of the Indian should again mingle with their life-stream."

"But this curse, father, has not been fulfilled; no fatality has ever attended our family."

"Well, yes, there has been a something which seemed like a fulfillment of the 'Saco's curse,' as the family legend calls it," the deacon said, slowly.

"In what way?"

"The Indian wife died in giving birth to a son, and, from that day to this, with but one exception, all the Paxton wives have had but one child, a son, and have died in giving birth to that child."

"Well, that certainly is very strange, father!" Sinclair said, thoughtfully.

"It really seems as if there was some truth in the old legend after all, doesn't it?"

"Yes; but you said there had been an exception."

"Yes, my father's wife, your grandmother. Her first child was a girl—your aunt Jane, but your grandmother died soon after my birth. All these particulars were related to me by my father just before my marriage. Of course I did not believe in the legendary story and married without giving it a thought. But your birth cost your mother her life, and, for the first time, I began to believe that possibly there might be some little truth in the assertion that the Saco's curse was clinging to our family."

"And the only way to remove the spell is for one of the Paxtons to marry an Indian girl?" Sinclair said, thoughtfully.

"So runs the legend."

"But, father, did any of our family ever marry a second wife after the first one died?"

"No; I believe that has never occurred."

That might break the spell. I've half a mind to try that myself," the deacon said, laughing.

"I do not think the Saco's curse will keep me from marrying if I find a girl I like," Sinclair said.

"Oh, it is probably only accident, after all."

Sinclair departed, fully satisfied of his father's consent.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 140.)

Madame Durand's Proteges;

OR,
THE FATEFUL LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WEED," "CECIL'S DECEIT," "ADRIA THE ADOPTED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

THROUGH TRIBULATIONS—PEACE!

MEANTIME, where was Mirabel?

She had slipped her hand from the loving clasp of her husband, with her dark eyes beaming full of the light of radiant, perfect joy and trust; had moved away, a stately, incomparable being in his rapturous sight.

The anteroom was dimly lighted through a single ground glass globe affixed to the swinging chandelier. Scarcely had the door closed between her and the room she had left when a cloud of suffocating blackness descended upon her, through which was perceptible the sweet, sickish odor of chloroform.

She was torn from her feet and crushed through an aperture, something slid into place behind her, and she felt herself borne downward through a space so narrow that her dress of white, crisp muslin swept the walls on either side.

So sudden had been the attack, so irresistible the force which had borne her away—as the bursting tempest will carry a defenseless drift before it—that she could offer no resistance. And in a moment that sweet, sickish essence had accomplished its mission, and she lay a helpless weight in her captor's arms.

When consciousness came back, she found herself in a small room, imperfectly lighted by a single taper burning low in its socket. She was resting on a straw mattress flung upon the bare floor, and a dark cloak which yet exhaled a faint odor of chloroform, was crushed in a heap at a little distance.

By her side some one was kneeling, covering her hands with impassioned kisses, and murmuring her name in fond, triumphant accents.

"Mirabel, oh! peerless Mirabel!"

With a shudder she wrenched her hands away, and raised herself to a sitting posture, not able to comprehend for a moment what had befallen her or how she had come there.

"Lucian Ware!" she murmured, in bewilderment, as she traced his features by the dim light. "How did you come here? Where is Erne?"

The face of the man beside her was cruel in its mocking triumph.

"Ah, sweet! We are here together. What does it matter for all the rest of the world? You are mine, fair Mirabel, beyond power of any one snatching you away. Mine for time, or mine for eternity—for we shall either live for each other, or die together."

"Are you mad?" cried Mirabel, thrilling with fear as she saw the frenzy of passion which convulsed his face. "What is this place to which you have brought me? Oh, Lucian Ware, what rash act was this! Do you not know that my friends—that my husband—will never rest until I am found, and you punished? Take me back, I beseech you!"

His laughter was a shrill scream, which rung and echoed in the room. Such discordant mirth, and such triumphant flames as danced in his paling eyes!

She shrunk away from him, but her eyes were fixed with a fascinated gaze upon his pallid, mocking face.

"Lovely Mirabel! It would be little wonder if I were truly mad with the joy of this moment. Poor, snared bird, why should you tremble so? No greater madness than love for you can ever thrill through my veins or quicken my heart-throbs."

"See how calm I am, and listen while I tell you how hopelessly you are in my power—how utterly you are mine."

"Do you remember the tale which the madame rehearsed that first night you were at the manse—the story of fair, false Rosalie Durand and her hapless lover? He was never seen after he left the tower, according to the madame's tale. But tradition has sent down another version of the fate which befell him."

"Tradition whispers that the workmen brought from over the seas and sent back to their foreign homes again when the task was completed, built a secret chamber, closed in around by the vaults beneath the tower. There was an underground passage, and a secret stairway leading from it up to every floor of the manse. They say, that when M. Valliers Durand returned to discover his rival in company with frail Madame Rosalie, the secret chamber found an ocean of water from the sky."

"The story has a queer fascination for me. I admire the spirit of that M. Durand who doomed his rival to such a justly-merited fate."

"I have brought you, sweet Mirabel, by way of the secret stair and the underground passage to the secret room, closed in about by the charnel vaults beneath the tower. The manse has been rebuilt in part, but the secret stair which is only a shell around the central spiral way, and the sliding panel which opens into the little anteroom, have never been disturbed."

"Not one of your friends dreams of the existence of this secret room. The loudest screams you can utter will fail to penetrate these solid walls. You are mine, Mirabel, and no power on earth can snatch you from me."

She listened breathlessly, never losing a word.

When he was done she faced him, scorn blazing in her dusky eyes, determination stamped on every lineament of her still, white face.

"You have done bravely to entomb a defenseless woman," said she, with contempt for him ringing in her tones. "You would be a worthy descendant of that same M. Valliers Durand of whom tradition treats."

"How dare you offer me such insult—how dare you proffer your love to me, a wedded wife? Only my husband, brave and true, commands my heart. Yours I am not—never will be—though this prison-chamber proves my grave."

"Hunger and thirst are powerful agents to quell a haughty spirit," said Ware, grimly.

"I offer you love, sweet Mirabel, devotion, idolatry. Scorn me, and I will be your master; I will compel you to submission. That haughty pride of yours shall be bowed to the very earth."

"Mirabel, my queen! don't drive me to using harsh measures with you. Consent to leave all and go with me, Mirabel. Oh, love! look into my eyes and see how my heart and soul are yearning for you. Oh, sweet, be kind!"

Mirabel drew herself away, queen-like in her wrath and scorn.

"It would be useless to plead to a craven nature like yours," said she. "I do not fear you, for love is all-powerful. Oh, Lucian Ware! retribution will surely be meted out to you for all your dastardly acts. It was you who dealt that cowardly blow upon my unsuspecting lover; you have torn me from him in the first hour of our wedded joy; but I know he will never rest night or day until I am found, and you are fitly punished."

"Dark and threatening grew the face of the man she confronted. He bit his pallid lips to command his voice, which was hoarse with suppressed passion.

"We shall see if time and privation may not alter your views, madame. Neither for nor drink shall pass those lovely lips, until they willingly respond to mine in love's caresses. Those flashing black eyes shall not look upon the light of day until they meet mine with gentle, imploring glance. That stately form shall waste away in its concealed prison until it is glad to be fettered by the clasp of my arms."

"Yes, proud Mirabel! It shall be you who will sue before many days have passed."

She turned away from him with a gesture of repugnance, and Ware, after a moment's hesitation, took the remnant of taper from the sconce.

"Farewell, for the time, beautiful Mirabel. I shall hope for a warm reception when I come again."

She made no reply, and he passed out through a low door, artfully concealed in the seemingly blank wall, leaving her alone in utter darkness.

Strive as she might to be brave and patient, a thousand horrors would flock to assail her. Oh, it was terrible to be shut up there alone, surrounded by the vaults of the dead, shut off from all human intercourse except when her captor appeared to torment her.

She searched the walls of her prison with the touch of her delicate hands. Rough walls that oozed with an exhalation of slimy damp which spoke of their subterranean situation. But everywhere the surface seemed unbroken; she could find neither door nor aperture of any kind.

The air was musty, chill, and close, but there was ventilation above as she found by stretching her hands far over her head where an almost imperceptible draught was stirring.

The hours wore on without bringing a gleam of light into the thick darkness of the place.

Oh, dreary, dragging hours!

Oh, faithful heart above that is tortured by unknown fears, while the search goes vainly on!

Oh, breaking heart below that has lost all hope at last. Poor wasting frame, weak from famine, burning in every vein with the fever of unappeased thirst.

Oh, cruel heart that is wrung by her sufferings, but will not yield—will not even waver from its stern resolve.

Four days that are like an eternity of darkness, broken thrice by brief visits from her cruel captor, and not one morsel of food nor drop of cooling water has pressed her lips.

She lies upon the straw mattress, with a continuous moan for "water! water! water!" gurgling in a gasping way from her parching throat.

Oh, for the dew in Heaven to fall with blessed moisture on her burning brow. Oh, for the drops of a summer rain to plash on the lips that are shriveled and cracked with the raging thirst.

She has pressed them again and again to the parching lips, but the dank slime only serves to aggravate her torture. That consuming thirst is the only agony her failing senses can now understand.

She does not heed the approaching step, the opening door, the flash of sudden light. No motion and no sound from her except that continuous babble for "water! water!"

Ware stoops over her in affright. A shadow of remorseful fear sweeps like a black cloud over his face, and he speeds away in quest of the water she craves.

He is back soon, and he moistens the longing lips, the drops trickle one by one down the scorching throat.

The agony is over, and blessed relief has come.

Her closed lids tremble, and then are still in blessed slumber. Her hands then in the vessel of water he has placed by her side, and she smiles in the sweet dreams that visit her.

Then, with a sigh that is almost a sob, Ware bounds to his feet and hurries away. To save her he knows that he has run the risk of discovery. To obtain the water he has been to the inhabited part of the manse, and he has been seen—as we know.

It is night again. Star-gemmed midnight without—the same impenetrable blackness which never changes night or day in that underground prison—never except when the stream of artificial light announces Ware's coming.

Mirabel is awake, but haunted by mystic dreams. She fancies that she is hearing improbable sounds—footfalls in the space around and above her, spirit voices shrieking her name through echoing vaults.

She has been like one in a trance since the pain and the agony left her. So weak, that to lie there motionless is a luxury; so lost to thought that nothing troubles her.

Ware has been there once, and given her some light, refreshing broth, which she swallowed with infinite relish. The door swings back and he comes again, with bright hair massed in disheveled locks, his eyes blood-shot and gleaming with their opal passion-lights.

The door sways, and remains ajar. He dashes down his burning candle-end and springing forward clasps her in his arms. But through the vaults comes an echoing shout, he sees a glimmer of light through the crevice of the swinging door.

He clings it shut, and lays her gently down again. Resolve, like a glow of inspiration, sweeps over his pallid face.

Oh, the mighty force of the infatuation which has prepared him for this!

He snatches the light again, and kneeling, with his bare hand tears up a fragment of the floor. He touches the flame to the orifice he has made, and when he ceases a red eye gleams there.

Mirabel watches him with a languid curiosity which does not comprehend his motive. He comes close to her, his face aglow with desperate enthusiasm.

"My love, my bride in death! I swore you never should be taken from me, and we will die now together."

As he stoops to enfold her in his arms, she shivers and puts up her thin hands, waving him back. Like a flash the knowledge of the suffering he has caused her comes to her mind.

"What's that?" she asks, in an awestricken whisper, watching that lurid glow within the floor. "Who is calling me? Erne—husband!"

She tried to rise, but Ware held her back.

"What's that? Your death-warrant and mine," he answers, with impressive calmness. "There's a trench under there filled with powder, and that is a slow match you see burning. You scorned my love, sweet Mirabel, but mine you are at last."

An incubus of horror weighs upon Mirabel. She would scream out, but her powers of speech seem paralyzed. Breathless, fascinated, motionless, she watches that sullen coal sink lower within the floor.

"Only two minutes to live," breathes Ware at her ear.

Slowly, slowly, sinks the spark of fire. Suddenly it goes out in utter darkness. Ware moves uneasily.

"Has it ceased to burn?" he mutters, and, springing over the little space, stoops to revive the vanished spark.

In the same instant a voice calls, loudly: "Mirabel! Mirabel!"

It wakes her from the spell which has enthralled her—it sends her sudden strength. With a wild cry, she darts into the further corner of the room.

There is a hissing sound, a flash, a burst like all the thunder of Heaven gathered into one peal.

Walls are riven in twain! They totter—they fall. The earth rocks. Coffins in the charnel vaults start from their niches. Some are shattered, and ghastly skeletons stare forth.

Those who have penetrated the secret passage, and are searching the vaults, fall upon their knees, powerless from affright.

Only one springs forward, when forth from the riven wall creeps a white-clad figure, with a wan, emaciated face, which lights with ineffable joy as his arms open to receive her.

She nestles close to the manly breast, where the true heart beats within. Never more shall ill of life assail with that brave heart to her shield.

Let the curtain drop over such a holy scene, then ring it up again to witness the end and hear the explanations.

When the disappointed party returned from the fruitless expedition to Lyle Ridge, Fay put into their possession the clue which unraveled the mystery of Mirabel's sudden disappearance.

The anteroom was subjected to minutest examination until the sliding panel was discovered. With the secret stair and the passage beneath revealed, the mystery was cleared away.

Ware, becoming cognizant of this discovery, hastened to effect the tragic end he had prepared should his plans fail.

Miraculous, indeed, was Mirabel's escape. Ware was unearthened from the ruins, his body crushed to a shapeless mass, his face fair, serene and perfect in death.

As they laid him down upon the earth, under the glare of the torches, a fitting, silent figure came in from the passageway. The woman whom we have seen before, whom the reader has before now rightly conjectured to be Heloise Vaughn.

Valere, seeing her face, convulsed and grief-stricken as it was, recognized her.

"Heloise!"

She stood above the prostrate, silent form, wringing her hands in mute anguish, then gazed around upon the waiting group.

"He is dead—he has suffered the Fate of the Durands. He has been sacrificed for an atonement. The prophecy is fulfilled, and the curse stops with him."

Her voice was intensely calm and clear as she turned her face upon Valere, who stood a little aside, still clasping his rescued bride.

"You have nothing to fear," she said. "I felt the Fate, and I prayed that it might descend upon you, but it has fallen on him instead. He was your twin brother—you were the twin sons of Jules Durand."

Startling revelation to those who listened. Valere uttered a cry, and Mr. Thancroft started forward, but, with a gesture, the woman commanded silence. She continued steadily.

"When the twin boys were born, their mother went nearly wild with grief, knowing the Fate which the prophecy foretold for one of them. I was her aunt, and a Valliers, though she never knew it—she thought I came of her mother's family."

"You all know of the feud which existed between those of our house and the Durands. I shared it, though the baby-wife had won me over to favor her husband, who was one of them."

"But the old madame I hated, and I saw here a chance to strike that overweening pride of hers a deadly blow."

"I persuaded Jules' wife to conceal the birth of one of the children, and I put it out to nurse with a woman who passed it for her own. That one you knew as Lucian Ware."

"After his mother's death, madame paid me for the care of the other, and in our bargain I stipulated that she should interest herself in the welfare of the little son of my niece, as I openly recognized Lucian to be. Madame never suspected that my niece had been the wife of her son, instead of the woman Ware, who died near the same time."

"The one I had in charge I called by the name of his grandfather, who was Erne Valliers until the name was changed to Valliers Durand when he married the madame. The ignorant people of the village called it wrong, and I never set them right, so the name came to be Valere."

"He was like the Durands, and I hated him for the resemblance. Once when he found the little vial of poison, I stood there, thinking how glad I should be if he would die; but, when I saw the stopper loosen in the tube, I snatched it away, for he was of our blood, too, and I dared not let him bring the Fate upon himself."

"When they were old enough to be put to school, madame sent both the boys away; and when they arrived at manhood she

brought Valere here to the manse as you know, while Lucian was put with Mr. Thancroft."

"He had grown up like us Valliers, and I was both proud and fond of him. I never let him suspect his identity, but I nourished the ambition which would make him a princely master of all Fairview some day. I waited, hoping the Fate might fall upon the other one, and meaning then to produce Lucian as the rightful heir."

"But madame died and her will baffled my intentions. She was too vindictively proud to openly acknowledge the youth whom she believed to be Jules Durand's only son—but she was never so bitter as she professed, and made her will to secure the estates to her lawful heir."

"I knew how you were searching for me since, but I kept out of your way, for I meant that at last Lucian should have it all. I was waiting—waiting always for the Fate to seize its victim, and be appeased forever."

"I knew of the secret passage, and I have remained in the secret room sometimes for days together. Lucian often met me here, but of late he warned me to keep away. Alas, alas! I knew not the fatal plans he had in view."

"It is all over and I am desolate. Ah, misere, misere!"

Thus all the mystery was cleared away at last.

Lucian was laid to rest in the vault of the Durands.

Heloise Vaughn could not be persuaded to remain at the manse after the funeral was over, and not long after she was found dead at the foot of one of the mountain fastnesses.

Fay St. Orme took her portion of thirty thousand dollars, and straightway sailed for Europe. Whether or no she accomplished her ambitious intent of wedding an earl, remains yet to be seen.

The little martin-box in the village was deeded to Milly Ross at Mirabel's request, so North had not long to wait for the pale little wife who learned to appreciate his noble worth by such a bitter lesson. Their prospects seem dazzling to them, since North has lately come to be sole agent of the great Durand estate.

Doctor Gaines and his maiden sister are proud to be on intimate terms with the great people at the manse; and Mr. Thancroft is satisfied now that the son of Jules Durand has regained his ancestral rights.

Erne Valere is known now as Valliers Durand.

The fatal ring of amethysts and pearls has been destroyed, but right regally does Mirabel wear the Durand diamonds, and the manse has never known a fairer or stately mistress.

But more precious than priceless gems is the love these two bear each other.

THE END.

The readers of this fine novel, just finished, will be delighted to learn that in an early number we will commence Mrs. Burton's new story.

FLORIEN'S FORTUNE;

OR,
The False Widow's Scheme,

which, we can confidently say, is one of the best love romances that has ever graced the pages of a popular paper. Mrs. Burton is a chaste, spirited and decidedly original writer, a Miss Mulock and George Eliot combined, yet with as keen a power of construction as Collins or Read ever have shown. Her new novel should be read by every reader who knows what a good novel is.

A Dead Man's Story.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

You wonder that my hair is so thickly streaked with silver while I am yet so young in years? Perhaps your locks would have been as white as mine if you had passed such an ordeal as that which whitened my hair, and gave me a memory to carry through life of the most exquisite suffering a man can undergo.

Tell it to you? Ugh! I shiver to think of it! Every thing connected with that terrible experience comes up

Then I fell into a broken, troubled sleep, from which I awoke to the consciousness of a keen, knife-like pain which darted from my shoulder through all my nerves, and ran tingling to the extremities of my limbs.

In this condition the surgeon found me on his next visit.

"I foresee how it would be," he said. "You had better submit to the loss of a limb than the loss of life. In a short time, if this inflammation goes on, it will be too late to risk an operation."

"I can't lose my arm," I said, stubbornly, thinking of the wreck I should be with only my left arm to fight the battle of life out with. "Besides, the amputation might kill me," I added.

"It might," was the reply; "but the chances of your getting well after an amputation of your arm would be far greater than they are at present. However, if you are determined to hang to your arm, we must try and do the best we can for you."

And after dressing my wound, now terribly inflamed, he left me.

For a short time after his departure I was comparatively comfortable, but by and by the sharp, darting pains began again, and soon I was suffering intensely.

Presently the nurse came up. Seeing how terribly I was suffering, he called to the surgeon, who was passing through the ward.

"Poor fellow!" the surgeon said. "I'm afraid he'll have a hard time of it. Give him one of these powders now, and, in case the attacks come on again, give him another. Should they be very severe, give him two."

I swallowed the drug, and gradually the sense of excruciating pain died out, and at last oblivion came.

It was late in the night when I awoke from the effect of the opiate.

Just at daybreak the attack came on with much greater violence than before. I thought I was dying. An intense, fiery pain seemed to concentrate itself in my wound, and then surge all through my body, like a wave of blood heated to intensest heat.

The nurse was greatly alarmed when he came in, and hastily prepared the potion ordered by the surgeon. I took it eagerly, anxious for something to relieve me from the horrible agony I was undergoing.

Again that subtle, deathly stupor crept over me and I felt all consciousness leaving my brain.

After that, for a long time, life was an utter blank to me. It was as though it had been taken away from me for a time and only given back grudgingly at last.

When again a vague sort of consciousness came stealing in upon my sluggish senses, I became aware of voices in the room. I listened. I could hear words spoken, but they seemed far off and indistinct. Gradually they came, or seemed to come nearer, until I could distinguish what was being said.

"He died day before yesterday," I heard the surgeon say, in tones of respectful sympathy. "The nurse found him suffering terribly, and gave him a dose of morphia. That seemed to quiet him at once. After he grew quiet the nurse left him. When I came around an hour later he was dead. I thought best to telegraph to you, and did so, knowing that it would afford you a sad consolation in taking him home for burial among your kindred."

"I thank you very much for your kindness," another voice made answer, a voice choked with tears, the voice of my mother. I knew at once. "If I could only have been here before he died! My poor, poor boy!"

Good hours! They thought I was dead. For hours I had been lying there in the semblance of death, and my mother had been sent for to come and take me home for burial!

I tried to open my eyes; to lift my hands; to speak! In vain. No muscle moved in answer to the dictates of my will. My will was not sufficient to set in motion the currents of life in my torpid veins. An awful, terrible feeling crept over me when I found that my body had thrown off its allegiance to my will; that I was powerless to move, even a finger or an eyelid. I was really dead, so far as outward appearances were concerned.

A sudden breeze seemed to sweep over me. I felt myself receding into unconsciousness again, as a wave goes out from shore till its individuality is lost. I was a wave in the tide of life, going out into oblivion.

I thought I was really dying. The semblance of death was fast becoming its reality.

Then there was another blank in my existence.

The first impression I felt when I began to be conscious again was one of extreme cold. I seemed to be in some icy region. All my energies seemed to be congealed into a deadly numbness. Again I tried to move, but my will was powerless to act upon my body. Not a muscle stirred.

How long was this to continue, I asked myself in a dull, wondering, stupefied way. Where was I? Perhaps I was dead, after all. How did I know that people were unconscious of earthly life and happenings after death? Perhaps they knew when friends bent over them to kiss their faces for the last time. It might be.

By and by I became conscious of being in a cramped position. Suddenly the truth flashed upon my bewildered senses. I was in my coffin. That last, narrow house of ours, never a very pleasant thing to contemplate. But to feel it cramping your limbs! To be beneath its imprisoned lid! Ugh! I shiver at the remembrance now!

Then I heard steps. Men came in and I felt myself lifted up and borne out. I was carried along slowly for some way. Then I could tell by the motion that the bearers of my coffin were ascending steps. I heard the creaking of heavy doors, and then the deep tones of an organ. Some one was playing a dirge.

I knew then that I was in the church I had attended previous to my enlistment in the army. I had often played the organ which was giving out such sad, deep tones of sorrowful lament for me. But I had never dreamed of hearing it again under such circumstances as these.

Then I heard the minister read in slow, unpassioned tones: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whosoever believeth in me, though he be dead, yet shall he live again."

Then came words of holy comfort. I heard it all as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life, and yet I was powerless to stir a muscle of my body.

I struggled impotently with the deadly lethargy which was on me. It seemed as

though my frantic efforts to set free the pent-up currents of the flood of life must avail, and break down the barrier between me and the other life.

Then friends came to take the last look! I heard them sobbing over me, heard their stifled words of parting, and felt their warm tears falling on my stiff face. Mother came last. She leaned across the coffin, dropped her cheek to mine, and whispered in a mother's sorrow at parting with her dead—"My boy! my boy! I loved you so!"

Somehow those words seemed to strike the hidden springs of life, and start them into motion. The tide of life began to flow, and—I opened my eyes and whispered—"Mother!"

Three weeks after this I was able to sit up, but my hair had faded to its present color! Do you wonder?

Mohenesto: Trap, Trigger and Tomahawk.

BY HENRY M. AVERY,
(MAJOR MAX MARTINE.)

XVII.—Buffalo and Buffalo-hunting.—*Epitaphs on the Hunt—Curing the Meat—Habit of the Buffalo—Buffalo Wool—An Indian Method of Killing Buffalo—The Plain-hunters—Their Mode of Hunting—What becomes of the Buffalo.*

In nearly all published accounts of buffalo-hunting, the writer narrates his escape from death by shooting down the leader; in which case they say that the herd of buffalo will divide, and go on either side of the hunter without harm.

These glowing descriptions are usually written by some enthusiastic tourist, who has been so brave as to leave the "apron-strings," and make a trip to some of our frontier forts, and who dislikes to go home without a story to tell of the exciting scenes through which he has passed; or his hair-breadth escapes from the Indians; or his miraculous preservation from death, by shooting the leading buffalo. The probabilities are, that he never saw a buffalo, unless, perhaps, it may have been a tame one at some of the forts.

Buffalo-hunting by white men, for sport; and buffalo-hunting by the Indians for a subsistence, are altogether different things. With the Indians, the best marksmen are selected for hunters, and the remainder of the party are detailed to take care of the meat after the hunters bring it in. Strong stakes are set in the ground at some distance apart, and ropes of hide are stretched from one to the other. The meat is then cut into strips, and is hung upon the ropes for curing, which consists merely in drying it in the air and sun's rays. After it is sufficiently dried, it is taken down and bound up into bundles, usually of about a hundred pounds weight.

During the time of hunting and curing, the hunters feast upon the most delicate part of the game, which is the tongue, liver and a peculiar fat, which is found along the back-bone of the buffalo.

They also add inconceivably to the poetry and life of the plains. "Geographical and road-makers by instinct," the best routes across the continent have been established upon their beaten trails.

They once roamed over the entire Pacific slope, and thence eastward to Lake Champlain. The last buffalo east of the Mississippi river was killed in Illinois in 1832. According to Fremont, up to 1833 one traveling between the Rocky Mountains and the Missouri river, never lost sight of them. They have now greatly diminished, as more than half a million are killed every year—often from wantonness or curiosity. Every emigrant is anxious to shoot a buffalo; and whitened skulls, perforated by bullets, make the road in some places a perfect Golgotha.

To the prairie Indian they are useful and indispensable as the camel to the Arab, or the reindeer to the Laplander. Their flesh supplies him with food during the entire year. Their hides clothe his person, protect his lodge from winter storms, and afford him an article of barter with the traders. Their hoofs furnish him with glue, for manifold purposes; and in these treeless wastes their excrement is an admirable substitute for firewood. Their strong necks, and their tough foreheads, which will flatten a rifle ball like a wall of stone, constitute a formidable battering-ram, and a blow from the head of a calf, two months old, is sufficient to prostrate an athletic man.

The buffalo wanders constantly from place to place, either from being disturbed by hunters, or in quest of food. They are much attracted by the soft, tender grass which springs up after a fire has spread away the snow with their feet to reach the grass. The bulls and cows live in separate herds for the greater part of the year; but at all seasons, one or two bulls generally accompany a large herd of cows.

The buffalo is, in general, a shy animal, and takes to flight instantly on seeing an enemy, which the acuteness of its sense of smell enables it to do from a great distance. They are less wary when they are assembled together in numbers, and will then be blindly follow their leaders, regardless of, or trampling down the hunters posted in their way. It is dangerous for the hunter to show himself after having wounded one, for it will pursue him, and although its gait may be heavy and awkward, it will have no difficulty in overtaking the fleetest runner.

Many instances might be mentioned of the treachery with which this animal pursues his revenge; and I once knew of a hunter who was detained for ten hours in a tree by an old bull, which had taken his post below to watch him. When it contents with a dog, it strikes violently with its fore-feet, and in that way proves more than a match for an English bull-dog. The favorite Indian method of killing buffalo, is by riding up to the fattest of the herd on horseback, and shooting it with an arrow. When a large party of hunters are engaged in this way, the spectacle is very imposing, and the young men have many opportunities of displaying their skill and agility. The horses appear to enjoy the sport as much as their riders, and are very active in eluding the shock of the animal should it turn on its pursuer. The most generally-practiced plan, however, of shooting the buffalo, is by crawling toward them from the leeward; and in favorable places, great numbers of them are taken in pounds.

When Indians hunt the buffalo with bows and arrows, their horses are trained to keep by the side of their victim until the arrow is discharged; then, springing directly away, he escapes the charge of the infuriated animal. The buffalo runs with a long, rolling gait, leaning first to one side for a short time, and then to the other, and so on alternately.

The flesh of the buffalo, in good condition, is very juicy and well flavored, much resembling that of well-fed beef. The tongue is considered a delicacy, and may be cured so as to surpass in flavor the tongue of an English cow. The lump of flesh covering the long spinous processes of the first dorsal vertebrae is much esteemed. It is called *dos* by the Canadian voyageurs, and *wig* by the Orkney men in the service of the Hudson Bay Fur Company. The *wig* has a fine grain, and when salted and cut transversely, it is almost as rich and tender as the tongue.

The fine wool which clothes the buffalo renders its skin, when properly dressed, an excellent blanket. This wool has been manufactured in England into a remarkably fine and beautiful cloth, and in the colony of Osnaboyana, on the Red river, a warm and durable coarse cloth is made of it. Much of the pemmican used by the employees of the fur companies is made of buffalo-meat, procured at their posts on the Red river and Saskatchewan. One buffalo cow, in good condition, furnishes good meat and fat enough to make a bag of pemmican weighing one hundred and twenty pounds. The buffalo which frequent the woody parts of the country form smaller herds than those which roam over the plains, but are individually of a larger size.

The herds of buffalo wander over the country in search of food, usually led by a bull most remarkable for strength and fierceness. While feeding they are often scattered over a great extent of country, but when they move in mass, they form a dense and almost impenetrable column, which, once in motion, is scarcely to be impeded. Their line of march is seldom interrupted, even by rivers, across which they swim without fear or hesitation, nearly in the order that they traverse the plains.

When flying before their pursuers, it would be in vain for the foremost to halt, or to attempt to obstruct the progress of the main body, as the throng in the rear, still rushing onward, the leaders must advance, although destruction awaits the movement. The Indians take advantage of this circumstance to destroy large quantities of this favorite game; and certainly no mode could be resorted to more effectually destructive, nor could a more terrible devastation be procured, than that of forcing a large herd of buffalo to leap from the brink of a dreadful precipice upon a rocky and barren surface a hundred feet below.

When the Indians determine to destroy buffalo in this way, one of their swiftest-footed and most active young men is selected, who is disguised in a buffalo-skin, having the head, ears and horns adjusted on his own head, so as to make the deception complete, and thus accoutered, he stations himself between the herd and some of the precipices, which often extend for several miles along the river. The Indians surround the herd as nearly as possible, when the approach of the hunters, rushing forward with increasing impetuosity, and the force hurls them into the gulf, where certain death awaits them.

Buffalo have been seen in herds of three, four, and five thousand, blackening the plain as far as the eye could see. The story of a hunter who, being in the track of a herd of buffalo on a stampede, shot down the leader, and the drove immediately divided and passed him on either side, is to use an expression more forcible than elegant—an infernal lie! Both horse and hunter would have been trampled to a jelly by the thousands of sharp hoofs.

At night it is impossible for persons to sleep near them, who are unaccustomed to their noise, which, from the incessant lowing and roaring of the bulls, resembles distant thunder. Although frequent battles take place between the bulls, as among domestic animals, the habits of the buffalo are peaceful and inoffensive, seldom or never offering to attack men or other animals, unless outraged by them in the first instance.

The half-breeds of the Red River or Selkirk Settlements, are technically termed plain-hunters. Every spring they collect at the foot, to the number of a thousand or two—men, women and children—buy, beg, or borrow carts, horses, guns, knives, powder, oxen, and other hunting materials; elect a chief captain and a dozen second captains, establish rules for the guidance of their hunt, and start forth into the plains. A priest accompanies the party to bless the undertaking. The rules established on the occasion are rigorous. No buffalo must be hunted on Sunday; disobedience of orders is punished with the destruction of the offender's saddle, for the first offense; with a flogging for the second. Theft, even where the object stolen is only a sinew, is avenged by the exposure of the thief in the middle of the camp, while the crier thrice shouts his name, coupling it with the word "thief."

The march to the hunting-ground is long and severe. With the plain-hunter there is no medium between a feast and a famine. Women and children often cry themselves to sleep every night of the week, from sheer hunger; next week they are all ill of a surfeit.

Arriving at the hunting-ground, their camp is put in order. The carts are arranged in a circle, within which the women and children are placed. This done, the hunters mount their horses and survey the ground. With spy-glass in hand, the captain reconnoiters the plain, and as soon as a herd of buffalo is discovered, assigns to each lieutenant his place in the hunt. When all is ready, and the men prepared—as many as four hundred often start together—the commander gives the word, "Start!" It is a cavalry charge. The whole body advances first at a slow trot, then at a gallop, then at full speed. As their speed increases, the earth trembles; but when the herd perceive their enemy, and begin to paw the ground and make off, the sound and shock are like

an earthquake. A cloud of dust arises, mingled with smoke. Right into the midst of the herd dash the hunters, firing as they go, at the fattest cattle; ride on and on, through the close ranks of the buffalo, until there are but a few stragglers—the leanest brutes—alive. Each man has his mouth full of balls, and loads and fires at full gallop. As he seldom pulls a trigger until his gun is within a few feet of the mark, he hardly ever misses. Though the hunt seldom lasts over an hour or so, a good hunter will kill his ten or twelve buffaloes. It often happens that the party brings over twelve hundred tongues into camp. The herd dispersed, the horses are relieved from duty, and the carts come into play. Their functions—or rather those of the hunters when their turn comes—appear the most embarrassing part of the business. Out of twelve hundred carcasses lying together, and shot by four hundred hunters, to find the beasts shot by each, appears a knotty problem. It does not puzzle the plain-hunters. Every man knows his victim, and few disputes arise. A hunter was once asked how he could discover his eight or ten buffalo out of thirteen hundred, which lay huddled together on the plain. The half-breed replied:

"Suppose four hundred learned men were all to write words on a piece of paper, would not each of them be able afterward to recognize his own handwriting?"

Just so the plain-hunter recognizes his shooting. The task of skinning, drying, and manufacturing tallow and pemmican, mostly falls to the women; but as this business is often dangerous, the hunters superintend it. A hunter may escape the common accidents of the chase—broken bones, buffalo horns, and the like—and at the last moment fall a victim to the treacherous Sioux, who lurk about in the long grass, on the watch for scalps.

The rapidity with which the buffalo is disappearing from our territories will not appear surprising when we remember the great scale on which their destruction is yearly carried on. With inconsiderable exceptions, the business of the American trading-posts is carried on in their skins. Every year the Indian villages make new lodges, for which the skin of the buffalo furnishes the material; and in that portion of the country where they are still found, the Indians derive their entire support from them, and slaughter them with a thoughtless and abominable extravagance. Like the Indians themselves, they have been a characteristic of the Great West; and as, like them, they are visibly diminishing, it will be interesting to know where they are going.

The extraordinary abundance of the buffalo on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, and their extraordinary diminution, may be more clearly evident from the following statements: At any time between the years 1824 and 1836, a traveler might start from any given point, south or north, in the Rocky Mountain range, journeying by the most direct route to the Missouri river, and during the whole distance his road would always be among large bands of buffalo, which would never be out of his view until he arrived almost within sight of the abodes of civilization.

At this time the buffalo occupy but a very limited space, principally along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, sometimes extending at their southern extremity to a considerable distance into the plains between the Platte and Arkansas rivers, and along the eastern frontier of New Mexico as far south as Texas.

The following statement by a partner in the American Fur Company will further illustrate this subject by extensive knowledge acquired during several years of travel through the region inhabited by the buffalo: "The total amount of robes annually traded by ourselves and others will not be found to differ much from the following statement: American Fur Company, 70,000; Hudson Bay Company, 10,000; all other Companies, probably, 10,000: making a total of 90,000, as an average annual return for the last eight or ten years. In the Northwest, the Hudson's Bay Company purchase from the Indians but a very small number—their only market being Canada, to which the cost of transportation nearly equals the produce of the furs; and it is only within a very recent period that they have received buffalo robes in trade; and out of the great number of buffalo annually killed throughout the extensive region inhabited by the Comanches and other kindred tribes, no robes whatever are furnished for trade. During only four months of the year (from November until March) the skins are good for dressing; those obtained in the remaining eight months are valueless to traders; the hides of bulls are never taken off or dressed as robes at any season. Probably not more than one-third of the skins are taken from the animals killed, even when they are in good season, the labor of preparing and dressing the robes being very great; and it is seldom that a lodge trades more than twenty robes in a year. It is during the summer months and in the early part of autumn, that the greatest number of buffalo are killed, and yet, at this time, a skin is never taken for the purpose of trade.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 129.)

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A GENTLE KISS.

BY JON JOT, JR.

I lingered at the door that night
A long farewell to say
For I was not to see her face
For nearly a whole day—
For fourteen hundred minutes! oh,
How long a time to lose!
The moonbeams fell in radiance on
My patent-leather shoes.
And arching looking at the moon,
"How strange it is," said she,
"Those moonbeams are the only things
That ever have kissed me."
I almost half-imagined there
Might be a hint in this,
And tremblingly upon her lips
I pressed a gentle kiss.
And as I could not say a word,
There fell a sudden calm,
And then her father's voice we heard,
"Who gave that door a slam?"
Her mother raised her window up
And poked her nightcap out,
"For mercy sake, who smashed the glass?
There must be rogues about."
I softly stayed to hear no more,
But homeward gently strayed,
"I kissed her! I came along, ye ghosts,
I am not now afraid!"
That kiss it burned upon my lip
And lit the lonely road,
"I thought I walked on flowers while I
Was walking in the mud."
And when I called on her again,
More happy than before,
Her father said, "Now folks, to-night,
Be careful of the door."

An Affair of Honor.

A TRUE TALE OF THE "GOOD OLD TIMES."

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

A HORSEMAN, whose foam-covered and mud-bespattered animal showed that he had ridden furiously over muddy ways, pulled up at the door of the "Royal Charles" Inn, one gloomy day in November, 1632, and shouted in a commanding tone:
"House! House! Take my horse, there!"
As he spoke, the rider, a tall and noble-looking gentleman, whose rich dress bespoke him a person of distinction, swung himself off the animal and entered the inn, just as a humbacked dwarf came running out of the "Royal Arms," and took the animal. The dwarf was a queer-looking, but merry little fellow, with twinkling black eyes, a flat nose, and bushy, frowzy-looking hair and beard. He seemed to know the rider well, for he bobbed his head and grinned from ear to ear, saying:
"Give ye good-day, Sir Everard."

The other nodded absently, and entered the tavern. He seemed to be gloomy and preoccupied, as he entered the sanded tap-room, now almost deserted, and called to the burly host:
"A private chamber, and a flask of Malvoisie, host. Has any one been here for me, to-day?"
"No, Sir Everard, not a soul. Be pleased to enter by this door, and your worship shall have the best glass of Malvoisie in the countryside, if I do say it, that shouldn't say it."

And the obsequious host, bowing to the ground before his distinguished visitor, ushered him into the room indicated, and made haste to set a decanter and glasses on the heavy, solid-looking table at which the baronet had taken his seat.

Sir Everard Huntley took off his high-plumed hat, with its broad, shadowy brim, and laid it on the table above his rapier. Then he gloomily filled his glass, and tossed off two brimming goblets in succession, without seeming to relish either, for he looked more silent and abstracted than ever, despite the timid attempt of mine host to engage him in conversation.

After some minutes, during which the cavalier was engaged in thought, to all appearance, he abruptly said:
"Tell Merlin to let me know the instant a gentleman comes in sight from London. I expect a visitor."

"Certainly, Sir Everard."
And mine host disappeared, in his soft list shoes, trailing like a cat. In a little while he returned, and resumed his station behind the baronet's chair, where he waited in silence.

Sir Everard looked thoughtfully out of the window at the gray sky.

Presently the clatter of boots was heard, and Merlin the dwarf entered the room, with a big stick in his hand, which he used to hang up the horse-furniture that his short body was unable to lift to the proper pegs by other means. He set it down against the wainscoting, and addressed Sir Everard with a freedom the thoughtful cavalier seemed not to notice, though mine host kept winking at the deformed hostler to be more civil. Sir Everard listened, with a thoughtful, half-absent stare.

"Look a-here, Sir Everard," said Merlin, "methinks you should have had enough of fighting duels by this time. There was Captain Howard, of His Majesty's Guards, and young Lord Scoresby, both sent to kingdom come, and all about a drunken frolic, and now here's another one coming."

"Who's coming, Merlin?" demanded the baronet, sternly, compressing his lips under his black mustache.

"The French count, or marky, what d'ye call him?" said Merlin, boldly; "and what's more, Sir Everard, you'd better be careful this time, for the French marky's a better fencer than ever you met before."

"How far off is he?" demanded Huntley, quietly.

"He'll be here in two minutes," said the dwarf, sulkily; for the baronet did not seem to notice his free tone any more than the barking of a distant dog.

Sir Everard rose and put on his hat and rapier, threw a piece of money on the table, and stalked out without a word.

"There he goes, proud as ever," grumbled the dwarf. "I hate to see him get killed, but they say that French marky's a devil to fence. Halloo! they ain't a-going even to stop here."

From where they were, they could see Sir Everard mount his horse, ride out into the road, and gravely but courteously salute a second cavalier, after which the two rode away together.

"They're bound to have the funeral of one of them here; that's one comfort!" observed mine host, with a sigh of relief, "and there's allers pickings out of the pockets. What made you so officious, Merlin? You'll drive away trade, you fool!"
"It's a bad trade," said the dwarf, sulkily, "and I don't care how soon it breaks up. Ever since the king made the ordinance

about fighting inside of Middlesex, we've had naught but dead men here, because we're on the county line of Hertfordshire."
"Mind thy business, and attend to the tap," said the host, angrily. "'Tis not for the likes of thee to meddle with nobility and gentry. Go thy ways. 'Tis all grist that comes to our mill. Ha! yonder go the seconds. We shall have a rare feast to-night."

And the host rubbed his hands, as a party of young gentlemen rode by on the same track as Sir Everard and the French marky, toward the dueling-ground known as "Dead Man's Close," about a quarter of a mile from the "Royal Arms." Many a party had the inn entertained before in those "good old days," as they are fondly called.

Meanwhile the party of horsemen rode rapidly on the muddy road till they came to the celebrated field, into which they all turned, dismounting and tying up their horses.

Then followed a series of ceremonious introductions between all parties, the bows being most profound, the smiles of the sweetest. The Marquis de Marigny, Sir Everard's antagonist, was a person of punctilio, who had killed his man ten or twelve times already, in the most gentlemanly way.

There were six seconds, three for each principal, and, according to the amiable custom of the day, every one of these gentlemen, only just introduced to each other, was bound to engage an antagonist with whom he had no earthly quarrel, and kill or disable him if possible.

"Come, gentlemen," said the English baronet, politely, "if you are all ready let us begin. There is no time to lose, if we hope to get back to supper."

"I entirely agree with Sir Huntley," said de Marigny, with a sweet smile. "Let us begin by all means, for the air is chilly."

Then the whole of the eight gentlemen, one after another, threw off their doublets, drew their swords, and at the signal of the principals crossing swords, all engaged simultaneously.

To a person in our nineteenth century it seems equally strange and brutal that eight men should be found trying to kill each other about such a trifle; but at the time we write of, when every gentleman wore a sword, and vied with his neighbor in readiness and skill to use it, such scenes were common.

Clash! clash! went the long rapier, striking fire from each other; and the combatants, at first slow and cautious in their motions, speedily warmed up under the excitement of the conflict, and thrust and parry followed one another with furious rapidity.

In ten minutes two of the Frenchman's seconds were wounded, while one of the Englishmen was run clear through the body. Then, as if by mutual consent, all three of the unwounded seconds drew back and leaped on their swords to watch the fiercer combat between the principals. Sir Everard and the marquis were evenly matched, both being good fencers and strong, active men. The Frenchman was more adroit and artful, but the superior strength and coolness of the Englishman compensated for the difference; and many a gliding pass, which would have forced the guard of another man, was turned aside with such force that the Frenchman was almost disarmed.

At last Sir Everard in his turn forced the guards of his antagonist, and rushing in, buried his blade in de Marigny's body. With a fierce groan of agony the Frenchman lifted his own blade, wounded to death as he was, and stabbed Sir Everard to the heart.

"Les dames Francaises sent les plus belles!" he muttered, as he sunk back. "Je t'ai vaincu!"

And de Marigny died.

"Well, my gay masters," said humpbacked Merlin, sneeringly, as the three bodies were laid out in the inn parlor; "ye have had a gay time, and enjoyed yourselves finely. Three dead men, and two high dead, about the color of a lass's cheek, and this, heaven save the mark!—is what you gallants call AN AFFAIR OF HONOR."

"The French ladies are the most beautiful, I have conquered him."

"THE PITTSFIELD AND NORTH ADAMS railroad, in Massachusetts, is not remarkable for speed. As a train on it recently came to a dead halt, a passenger exclaimed: 'Well, I wonder what we've stopped for now?' 'Why,' explains a fellow-traveler, 'it's to take the cow-catcher off the engine and put it on board, to keep the cows from running over us.'"

DEATH AT THE PALACE GATE.

BY T. C. HARRBAUGH.

Monarch, with the snowy hair,
Writhing on the bed of pain,
Gaze upon thy kingdom fair,
Gaze upon it once again,
See it be fore'er too late—
Death is at the palace gate.

Load he raps with bony hand,
And his summons, dread and dire,
Ringing through the trampled land,
Tells that tyrannies expire.
Subjects smile with hearts' ease,
Death is at the palace gate.

What will crowns avail thee now?
Will he for the scepter stay?
No! before him thou must bow:
Kings, like beggars, have their day.
Now dismiss the cares of state,
Death is at the palace gate.

Meet the monster like a man!
He's confronted thee before;
Thou hast led his army's van,
O'er the crimson fields of war.
Now he darts invader's state,
And has reached the palace gate.

What! hast thou a craven grown?
Shamer of thy ancestry!
Shirk behind thy gilded throne,
Death comes in his majesty.
Ah, he will no longer wait,
Just beyond the palace gate!

Draw the purple curtains close,
With your dirges now attend;
He who conquered many foes,
Has been conquered in the end.
Tumult now will rule the State,
Death has forced the palace gate.

A Planchette Story.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

NOR many years ago society was much excited over the movements of a certain mysterious little imp christened "Planchette."

As to the truth or falsity of the depositions of said little imp, the writer does not here certify, but it found a great many be-



AN AFFAIR OF HONOR.

lievers. Lovers were almost invariably firm in the faith; for, being a very accommodating little imp, Planchette nearly always says just what they want to hear. Lost articles—especially when somebody has any idea where they are—have often been found by its means.

And the writer has heard of a talented Western lawyer who was cured of his hitherto-incurable vice of drinking by its influence. As soon as he entered the room, Planchette began to race violently across the paper, writing over and over, "Lawyer Harrison! Delirium tremens!"

Which so afflicted him that he has not tasted a drop since. And it is a pity his family did not think to present the acute young lady whose hands were on Planchette with a testimonial of their gratitude.

But now for the story.
It chanced that a certain gentleman and his wife sat one evening in their cosy parlor, discussing this same mysterious little imp.

"I wish we had one," said the lady. "I do believe I could make it move if I had my hands on it."
"No doubt, my love," responded the husband, amiably; "women are generally capable of 'raising the devil.'"

"Now, William Brown, you hush," said the lady; "you are always trying to slander the women. I wonder who would send your buttons on if there weren't any?"

"Perhaps Planchette could tell me," slyly said William.

"Nonsense! Behave yourself, William. Don't you believe in Planchette?"

"Certainly, believe it to be a very amusing little contrivance."

"But don't you believe it can write?"

"Something or somebody appeared to write with it at Mr. Cook's."

"Yes, just so. And now, Will, I have an idea in my head."

"Indeed? Well, that is a remarkable occurrence! Pray give me the benefit of it," said the provoking William.

"Well, then," returned the lady, not taking notice of his speech, "I believe Planchette and Bridget over to borrow Mr. Cook's Planchette, so we can try it. What do you say?"

"Not supposing that I shall ever have any dealings with his Satanishness, I don't know that I am anxious to become acquainted with one of his familiar spirits; but I shall be delighted to witness your performances."

"William, you are hateful!"

"My love, you are angelic!"

"I won't talk to you," said she, rising, with a pout on her pretty mouth. "I can't get any sense out of you, so I'll just send Bridget on my own responsibility, and if it doesn't say you are a humbug, I will own it is one."

Bridget, then, being duly instructed, and invested with a clean white apron, presented herself at Mr. Cook's door, and made known her errand.

"Plaze, sur, Missis Brown sint me to ax w'd ye find her the loan o' yur Plain-shirt a little while?"

"My what?" asked Mr. Cook, looking puzzled, while Mrs. Cook stood in the door, a silent looker-on.

"Yur plain shirt, sur, plaze."

"My plain shirt! I never have any but plain ones. Wouldn't wear any other kind. Neither would Brown. Is it a pattern she wants, Bridget?"

"Faix, it's meself doesn't know, sur."

"What did she say, Bridget?"

"She said would I go over and ax the loan o' yur plain shirt, sur, an' that's all, so help me Moses."

"Why, what the deuce does the woman mean?" said Mr. Cook, in a complete puzzle.

"I know what she means," cried Mrs. Cook, stepping forward: "she means to be impudent, that's what she means. Bridget, go back and tell your mistress—"

"Hold on, Susan," put in Mr. Cook. "Maybe there is a mistake made."

"Yes, I should think there was a mistake made! Sending such a message as that here! I'll teach her not to make mistakes hereafter. Bridget, tell your mistress—"

"Hold on," cried Mr. Cook again, bursting into a loud laugh. "I believe I know what she wants! It's the Planchette!"

"The Planchette!" cried Mrs. Cook.

"Yes, Bridget hasn't got the word. Ain't that it, Bridget—the little board that writes?"

"Yis! yis!" cried Bridget, a smile of satisfaction breaking all over her broad, Irish face. "That's it to be sure! That's it—the bit of a board wid the devil in!"

By this discovery peace was restored to the irate bosom of Mrs. Cook, and Bridget, having received the "bit of a board with the devil in," went on her way rejoicing.

Now I ought to be able to write that Planchette as soon as it reached the white hands of Mrs. Brown, began to race over the paper, writing, excitedly: "Plain shirt!"

"I won't, captain—I won't," said Ned; "but"—lowering his voice and speaking almost in a whisper—"I tell you that I've had warnings, and there'll be a death in the ship before morning."

It is useless to attempt to reason an old sailor out of his superstitious ideas, than which none knew better than Captain Fenton. He turned away with an impatient gesture and walked aft, scanning the horizon for some sign of a wind. He could make out none, and went below to look at the barometer, but it gave no sign. Hour after hour passed; night was coming on, and still no wind. After the evening meal, as the captain was going on deck, he glanced at the barometer, and started back quickly as he saw that it was falling rapidly. Hurrying on deck, he glanced to the westward, and though there was no apparent change to a landsman, his experienced eye detected the signs of the coming storm. His orders were prompt and to the point. In a wonderfully short space of time the ship was stripped of all her superfluous canvas, and lying to under close-reefed foresail, storm-jib, jib and staysail, while two of the best men in the ship were at the wheel. The wind was now coming in fitful gusts and the helm was put over, bringing her dead before the wind. Scarcely was this done when, with a whoop and rush like that of disenthralled demons, the squall struck her, and the stout ship bent before its mighty rush like a reed to a summer wind.

All hands were on deck and at their stations, for they knew that they had no boy's play before them now, but dead, sober, earnest work. For a moment the ship seemed about to be thrown on her beam-ends, but the quartermasters "touched her up" at the right moment, and she was away like a race-horse, flying before the mighty gale. A minute before and it had been a clear, mellow twilight, but, in a moment, a gloomy pall had fallen upon the sea, and they dashed on in almost utter darkness.

"Hang out the lights, there," cried Fenton. "Quick, men, or we shall be foul of something."

Ned Fitchett ran forward with the lighted lantern to hang over the port-bow, and leaped out to put it in its place. As he did so, a block, torn from its fastenings, came down by the run and struck the lantern from his hand, and it fell into the sea. He sprang for another and ran back, this time stepping upon the rail and holding on by the railings. As he did so there came a loud hail, close aboard, and they had an indistinct vision of a mighty mass of wood and iron bearing down upon them, and something like a giant beak darted in over the rail.

Two egg-shells had crashed together on the pathless ocean! Staggering back from the shock, the Madeline recoiled from her course; the stranger did the same, and for a moment the two ran parallel with each other. A strange, hoarse cry was heard above the howling of the storm, and the lantern which Ned Fitchett had held was seen swaying upon the bowsprit of the stranger.

"Hang out the lights again," cried the captain. "Set the pumps going. Ned Fitchett! Where is he?"

The call was taken up, and passed from mouth to mouth, but they spoke to dead ears. Torn from the rail by the bowsprit of the stranger, he had been hurled far out into the sea, and perished in the night and storm.

Ned Fitchett's prophecy had been verified; he was the victim.

"Forecastle Yarns."

BY C. D. CLARK.

VIII.—THE HARPOONER'S PROPHECY.

A DEAD CALM!
Most landmen, unless they have lived near the sea, are apt to take this term too literally, for the open sea is never utterly at rest. The long swell rises and falls through a long summer calm, with the same steadfast monotony; and the sailor, loitering about the decks aimlessly, tells yarns in the fore-castle and in the tops, or spends his time in carving fanciful figures upon whalebone or walrus-tooth. Sailors do not like "still weather"; their life is monotonous enough without that, and they prefer the freshest gale which ever blew to the dreary death in life of the calm.

If the seamen are anxious, the officers are doubly so. They know that every day thus wasted is eating into the profits of the voyage; they look hopelessly over the rail, and curse the tardy wind which will not rise. So it was with the officers and crew of the ship Madeline, as she lay rolling in the heavy groundswell off the rugged shores of Newfoundland. They were not alone, for the "sheen of the ever-flashing sea" revealed a dozen other craft in the same situation, "whistling" for a wind.

The Madeline, Captain John Fenton, was engaged in the Greenland whale-fishery. As part owner of the noble craft, the captain felt the delay keenly, and his anxious glances were cast out across the water to the westward, from which he hoped the wind would come.

"What do you say, Ned Fitchett?" he

cried, addressing an old harpooner who sat in the shadow of the foremast, whittling at a walrus-tooth. "Are we going to have any wind to-night?"

"You may thank old Davy if you don't get more of it than you want," replied Fitchett. "You'll find it blowing great guns afore nine o'clock this here blessed night, and I wish that whalin' fleet wasn't quite so thick around here—that's all."

"Why, Ned?"

"We'll be foul of some of 'em afore morning, captain. See here; I don't want to scare anybody, but some one aboard this ship has got to die before we see another sun!"

"Nonsense, Ned; you ought to know better than to talk such stuff as that before the crew."

"I can't help it," replied Fitchett, doggedly. "I've seen signs and heard warnings that ain't to be mistaken. Why, when I was asleep in my bunk, this very morning, I dreamed of a coffin and a living death. I saw a white face look up at me out of the sea, and it cried, 'Come! Captain, there is death in the air to-day.'"

Two or three of the crew, who were loitering near, stopped to listen, and the captain sternly ordered the man to be silent.

"I never knew that you were a coward before, Ned." The man was on his feet, wild with passion, his brown hand upon his sheath-knife; but a moment's reflection calmed him.

"No, captain, no; I won't mutiny at my time of life, but I thought you knew the old man better than that."

"I beg your pardon, Ned," said the captain, extending his hand. "I do know you better, but you ought not to talk in that way before the men."

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